

The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria: the
Turkish Mamlūk sultanate (648–784/
1250–1382) and the Circassian Mamlūk
sultanate (784–923/1382–1517)

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The Turkish era of the Mamlūk sultanate

The Mamlūks' rise to power: a decade of trial and error

The Arabic term *mamlūk* literally means 'owned' or 'slave', and was used for the white Turkish slaves of pagan origins, purchased from Central Asia and the Eurasian steppes by Muslim rulers to serve as soldiers in their armies.¹ Mamlūk units formed an integral part of Muslim armies from the third/ninth century, and Mamlūk involvement in government became an increasingly familiar occurrence in the medieval Middle East. The road to absolute rule lay open before them in Egypt when the Mamlūk establishment gained military and political domination during the reign of the Ayyūbid ruler of Egypt, al-Šāliḥ Ayyūb (r. 637–47/1240–9).²

Al-Šāliḥ Ayyūb's army, including his elite bodyguard, the Baḥriyya, was mainly composed of Qipchak Turkish *mamlūks*. Al-Šāliḥ took great care to reserve most *iqṭā'*s (tax revenues from land assignments) for his *mamlūks* and to confer the most prominent positions upon his confidants. Shajar al-Durr,³ al-Šāliḥ's Turkish slave-girl and later his wife, was one of his regime's stalwarts without holding any formal position in government. The common background of al-Šāliḥ's *mamlūks* and the power they accumulated during his lifetime, coupled with the personal loyalty they felt towards him rather than to the Ayyūbid house, enabled Shajar al-Durr to run the kingdom upon his death in 647/1249, during the Crusader invasion led by King Louis IX of France, and to install his son Tūrānshāh on the throne. Tūrānshāh's attempts to consolidate his hold on power proved futile and brought about his murder and the eventual removal of the Ayyūbid dynasty from Egypt in 648/1250. The Mamlūks' victory over the Franks at al-Manṣūra, achieved in the absence of an

Ayyūbid ruler to lead them in battle, gave them a claim to both the traditional title of 'protectors of the faith' and rule in Egypt as devoted followers of al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's legacy. The Baḥriyya *mamlūks* chose to put Shajar al-Durr on the throne. Her rule, however, was problematic since political and ruling tradition in most Islamic regions, especially in the Arabophonic ones, denied females any formal position in government. Her accession had already aroused technical problems as well as vociferous ideological protests. Since Shajar al-Durr could not fulfil the role of *atābak al-ʿasākir*, commander in chief of the army, the oath of allegiance was jointly administered to her and *atābak al-ʿasākir*, indicating the army's share in government. Normally, one of the prominent Baḥriyya *amīrs* would have filled this post, but fear of power struggles among them led them to choose Aybak al-Turkmānī, a middle-ranking and non-Baḥri *amīr*, for the post. As one commentary has it, Shajar al-Durr married Aybak in order to make him worthy of his exalted role. This arrangement was kept in place for about three months. When the Ayyūbid legitimists took Damascus, the Mamlūks attributed the opposition to their relinquishing the sultanate to a woman and decided to put Aybak on the throne. When other Syrian provinces joined the Ayyūbids, Aybak was replaced, after ruling for only four days, by an Ayyūbid minor, al-Ashraf Mūsā. The Mamlūk victory in the battle of Kurāʿ (648/1251) marked the end of the Ayyūbid struggle over Egypt and brought about the caliph's recognition of the Mamlūks' de facto position. Power struggles among the Mamlūks, which had temporarily been put aside, now erupted in full force. Al-Muʿizz Aybak, decisively assisted by Shajar al-Durr, emerged victorious.

During Aybak's five-year reign, Shajar al-Durr continued to run the country while never allowing him to intervene. When she learned about Aybak's intentions to marry the daughter of Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' (r. 607–57/1211–59), ruler of Mosul, she arranged for his murder (655/1257). With Aybak's death, his Muʿizziyya household was the strongest military household in Egypt and from it emerged his real successor, al-Muẓaffar Quṭuz. After deposing Aybak's fifteen-year-old son, al-Manṣūr ʿAlī, in 657/1259, Quṭuz prepared to wage a holy war (jihad) against the invading Mongols.⁴

During the 630s/1230s and 640s/1240s the Saljuq sultanate of Anatolia (al-Rūm), Lesser Armenia in Cilicia, the northern Crusader principality of Antioch, and Georgia accepted Mongol suzerainty, a relationship that endangered Syria. The threat was realised when in 658/1260, two years after conquering Baghdad, Hülegü (d. 664/1265), Chinggis Khān's grandson, led the Mongol army, reinforced by Georgian, Armenian and Anatolian Saljuq contingents, across the Euphrates into Syria.

In the wake of the Mongol invasion of Syria, an influx of civilian and military refugees poured into Egypt. Fugitives from the defeated Ayyūbid armies, and Turcomans and Kurds who had arrived in Syria earlier in flight from the Mongols, all joined the Mamlūk army. Quṭuz decided to meet the Mongols on Syrian soil and marched, at the head of the Muslim army, north to Acre, the seat of the attenuated Latin kingdom of Jerusalem to secure the Franks' neutrality. The battle took place in 658/1260, near 'Ayn Jālūt.⁵ The victory left the Mamlūks without any real competitor for hegemony in the central part of the Muslim world and strengthened their popular legitimacy as protectors of Islam.

Quṭuz then advanced to Damascus to arrange appointments in Syria that symbolised Mamlūk control over the region. Yet Quṭuz would not reap the fruits of his victory, for he was murdered on his way back to Cairo by a group of Mamlūk *amīrs*. Baybars, who played a leading role in the murder, was elected as the new sultan in a council of magnates (*a'yān al-umarā'*) assembled immediately after the murder. Mamlūk sources mention various reasons for the murder. It appears that the main reason was the old inter-factional power struggle between the Bahrī and Mu'izzī *mamlūks*.⁶

The formative years of the Mamlūk state

During al-Zāhir Baybars' reign (658–76/1260–77) the foundations of the Mamlūk state were laid. Future generations would consider him as the true founder of the Mamlūk sultanate and the institutions he and his immediate successors established as the classic Mamlūk order.⁷ Whether the Mamlūk sultanate's institutions were originally Ayyūbid or a new Mamlūk creation is still an open question.⁸ As was the case with previous regimes supported by armies in the Muslim world, the Mamlūk sultan required two levels of legitimacy, the traditional in the Muslim community and the political within the Mamlūk elite. Since their seizure of power, the Mamlūks had not received an investiture diploma from the 'Abbāsīd caliph in Baghdad, who was traditionally considered the source of legitimacy for new regimes. The renewal of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate in Cairo might have rewarded Baybars not only with recognition of his personal position in power, but also by reinforcing the Mamlūk sultanate's position as the centre of the new Muslim world. An 'Abbāsīd refugee who appeared in Syria as early as Quṭuz's reign was proclaimed the new caliph with the title of al-Mustanşir, while the new caliph appointed Baybars as sultan over the sultanate territories and all future conquests (659/1261). Al-Mustanşir was sent off with a small expeditionary force to recover Baghdad from the Mongols. Inevitably, he and most of his

army were slaughtered upon crossing the Euphrates by Mongol troops. Another claimant to the caliphate was appointed in 660/1262; to prevent his involvement in politics, he was held in confinement in Cairo. Further encroachment on the position of the shadow caliphate in Cairo came in the mid-eighth/fourteenth century, when the ceremonial exchange of the *bay'a* (oath of allegiance) between the ascending sultan and the caliph was abandoned, and henceforth it was only the caliph who gave the sultan his oath of allegiance. Devoid of any ruling power, the caliph nevertheless played an important ceremonial role in legitimising the Mamlūk rule by regularly participating in the sultans' ascension ceremonies and religious festivals held under Mamlūk patronage. The 'Abbāsid caliphate in Cairo came to an end with the Ottoman conquest of the Mamlūk sultanate in 923/1517.⁹

With the establishment of the 'Abbāsid caliphate in Cairo, Abū Numayy, the sharīf of Mecca, recognised the Mamlūk sultanate protectorate over the Ḥijāz and withdrew his recognition of the Ḥafṣid caliph of Tunis. The Mamlūks' role as guardians of the holy places, Mecca and Medina, in addition to hosting the 'Abbāsid caliphate in Cairo, symbolised the Mamlūk sultanate's position as the supreme representative of orthodox Islam. The Mamlūks linked themselves to Islamic institutions also through patronage. They established mosques and colleges for the instruction of Islamic legal sciences (*madāris*, sg. *madrasa*), and other centres and lodges for the instruction and worship of Sufism (*khānqāhs*, *ribāṭs* and *zāwiyas*) which represented popular Islam.¹⁰ The building of religious foundations, preferably in the centre of Cairo, that included the donor mausoleum and often charity institutions for the vast population, became the custom with Mamlūk sultans. Religious endowments (*waqf*, pl. *awqāf*) were established for legally transferring rural or urban assets of commercial value for the maintenance of such religious and charitable foundations. The religious institutions supplied cadres of religious scholars ('*ulamā*') and Sufis who were responsible for shaping the normative Muslim codes of conduct and held posts in the religious bureaucracy and the education and judicial systems that granted legitimacy to rulers. Sufi orders enjoyed massive support from the Mamlūks owing to the latter's reverence for their shaykhs, and probably because Sufism was an easier religious denominator for integrating the multi-ethnic Egyptian and Syrian masses under their rule.¹¹ The Mamlūks gradually popularised the orthodox institutions of Islam by stipulating their desire for an orthodox curriculum in the Sufi lodges (*khānqāhs*) they had founded, and invited '*ulamā*', preferably foreigners of the Ḥanafī *madhhab*, to teach in them, and Sufis to instruct in the *madrasas*. Consequently, both orthodox and Sufi institutions underwent a process of

moderation, and by the end of the eighth/fourteenth century differences between the functions of the *khānqāh*, the *madrasa* and the Friday mosque were blurred. Instruction in Sufism already took place in the *madrasas*, and mosques and *khānqāhs* functioned as centres for both Sufi rituals, public recitations of the Qurʾān and Prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*), and the celebrations of Muslim festivals under Mamlūk patronage. By the end of the ninth/fifteenth century small mosques scattered all over Cairo functioned as places for prayer, teaching and Sufi rituals.¹²

Since the Mamlūk elite avoided passing their status to their descendants, it remained a small group of newly purchased slaves with a non-Muslim background within a community with a deep-rooted Arab-Muslim culture. The *ʿulamāʾ* and *fuqahāʾ*, by contrast, especially of the Shāfiʿī legal school who controlled the Egyptian and Syrian judicial system, were recognised as the normative representatives of the indigenous culture. In order to overcome what may have been perceived as social inferiority, the Mamlūks used their ethnic culture as a symbol of their unique status separating them, as a military ruling elite, from the civilian population. They spoke Turkish and preserved their original names, their dress and at least part of their diet. The influence of the Mongol culture, which in certain respects resembled the Turkish one, was also evident, at least in the formative period of the Mamlūk sultanate when thousands of Mongol warriors, the Wāfidiyya, entered Egypt with their families.¹³ While scholars agree that the Mamlūks directed a distinct judicial system that was not based on the *sharīʿa*, or Islamic religious law, they hold different opinions on the question of whether Baybars based it on the *Yāsā*, the Mongol legal code founded by Chinggis Khān.¹⁴

The Ayyūbid judicial system in Egypt, in which the Shāfiʿī school (*madhhab*) enjoyed absolute dominance, remained unchanged until Baybars' rise to power. In 663/1265 Baybars granted representation to the other three Sunnī schools, the Mālikī, Ḥanafī and Ḥanbalī, by nominating a chief judge (*qāḍī*) to each of them. The Shāfiʿī chief *qāḍī* henceforth enjoyed only a symbolic supremacy over his counterparts in the judicial system. Baybars intended to increase the prestige of the Ḥanafī *madhhab* to which the Mamlūks belonged.¹⁵ Baybars, however, was unsuccessful in abolishing the absolute control of the Shāfiʿī school over the *waqfs* in Egypt and Syria which had amassed considerable wealth.

The Mamlūk sultan, like his Ayyūbid predecessors, presided over a form of administrative justice, *dār al-ʿadl*, which rested on his discretion, and dealt with matters of state (*siyāsa*) and injustice of office-holders in the state administration.¹⁶ In theory, the sultan's secular justice in *dār al-ʿadl* and the *qāḍī*'s

religious justice in the *sharʿī* court were discrete. In practice, however, no real separation existed, for the chief *qāḍīs* advised the sultan on *siyāsa* matters in the *sharīʿa* spirit, while they had to adhere to his *siyāsa* decisions and relied on his army for the enforcement of their verdicts.¹⁷

The sultan was also the highest authority in the administrative system the Mamlūks had inherited from the Ayyūbids. Traditionally, the Chancery bureau (*dīwān al-inshāʿ*) was staffed by learned religious Arab civilians, owing to their command of the Arabic language. The access of the senior secretary, *kātib al-sirr*, in *dīwān al-inshāʿ* to information included in the sultan's correspondence made him eligible to deal with state postal services (*barīd*) which also dealt with espionage within the sultanate. The financial administration included three bureaux. The *dīwān al-māl*, or finance bureau, dealt with land taxes and other sources of state revenues, the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ*, or the sultan's private purse, managed the sultan's revenues and income from his private estates, and the *dīwān al-jaysh* (the army bureau), managed the distribution of *iqṭāʿ* and payment of salaries to the army.¹⁸ The financial and fiscal bureaux were traditionally staffed by Coptic clerks, owing to their professionalism passed from generation to generation, and often new converts from among them served as viziers (*wazīrs*). While during the Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid periods the vizier's responsibility extended over almost all state bureaux, during the Mamlūk period central administrative positions lost their importance to Mamlūk administrative posts in the sultan's household. Thus, Baybars limited the vizier's responsibility to fiscal matters only and his functions overlapped those of the *ustādār* (majordomo), whose authority was extended from the management of the sultan's household to include state financial matters. Similarly, the functions of the *ṣāhib al-inshāʿ* overlapped those of the *dawādār* (official pen case bearer) whose duties also included the sultan's correspondence, postal service, foreign relations and espionage.

While during the Ayyūbid period the army had been at the beck and call of the ruling house, in the Mamlūk state the Mamlūk army became the ruling elite and the sultan came from within its ranks. It was necessary, therefore, for the sultan to establish clearly defined rules for the normative organisation of the army, guaranteeing the sultan's sway over the *mamlūks*, especially his erstwhile colleagues. The army Baybars inherited included different Mamlūk factions and numerous refugees for whom the Egyptian army had provided a haven. Baybars created a new framework for a single army subordinate to the central government that comprised three main parts: the royal *mamlūks* among whom were the sultan's new recruits, the *amīrs'* soldiers and the *ḥalqa*, a non-Mamlūk (including the subgroup of the *mamlūks'* children, *awlād*

al-nās) and masterless veteran Mamlūk corps. The royal *mamlūks* were to gain exclusive status, the *amīrs*' *mamlūks* remained under the direct command of their masters, but were to be placed at the state's disposal whenever necessary, and the *ḥalqa*, although secondary in status, came under the sultan's direct control.¹⁹ Turcomans and Bedouins served as auxiliary forces in the Mamlūk army; they took part in campaigns both as cavalry and infantry. In peacetime they carried out military duties of guarding frontier zones, maintaining the royal postal system, and supplying relay horses to the *mamlūk* army.²⁰

Baybars increased the number of *mamlūks* in the army and introduced the supply of uniform equipment for the *mamlūks* funded by the sultan's treasury. He maintained the army at a very high level of professionalism and readiness through intensive training and frequent inspections of his troops.²¹ *Mamlūks* were usually purchased at a young age. Upon arrival in Cairo, they were quartered in the Citadel barracks and divided into peer groups by age and ethnic origin. Education consisted of two principal stages: religious studies, which continued until adolescence, followed by a period of rigorous military training that only came to an end when the *mamlūk* had attained a high level of military skills. At the end of the training period, *kuttābiyya*, the *mamlūk* underwent an emancipation ceremony and was brought into his master's military service. The *mamlūk*'s career began with a number of low-level offices with a modest salary that gradually increased over time. Senior *mamlūks* were granted *iqṭā'*s and juniors received monthly salaries. Baybars introduced a new rank stratification and linked it with the *iqṭā'* system.²² The rank hierarchy included, in ascending order, *amīr* of ten, *amīr* of forty or *ṭablkhāna* and, at the top, *amīr* of one hundred. Each rank indicated the normative number of mounted soldiers included in the *amīr*'s retinue and the corresponding size of *iqṭā'* he received.²³ Some of the *amīrs* of one hundred, who were also members of the royal council that managed affairs of state, were also appointed commanders of one thousand, a force of some one thousand mounted soldiers in campaigns (*ṭulb*, pl. *aṭlāb*). A hierarchical stratification of offices in the sultan's court and household administration and governorships was also developed.

In addition to the Islamic legitimacy that Baybars sought for his reign, which was skilfully fostered around his image as a jihad warrior and normative Muslim ruler, he also had to gain royal legitimacy within the military elite. Since he had no Mamlūk household of his own to support his rule upon his ascent, he sought support among his *Ṣāliḥī* peers by granting them significant representation in government. Even when Baybars' household had already been established, only a few of his *mamlūks* were appointed to key positions.

With his rivals, however, he was ruthless, regardless of their factional affiliation.²⁴ Baybars' authority in Syria was precarious, as over a decade was to pass until unassailable Mamlūk control was consolidated. Separatists who sought independent rule in Syria were gradually removed and replaced by Baybars' governors. From the 670s/1270s Syria's assimilation into the sultanate was absolute, so much so that during the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries, Syrian urban centres, especially Damascus and Aleppo, served as bases for organising factional struggles over rule in Cairo.²⁵

A significant sector with the potential for disorder were the nomads in Egypt and Syria that included indigenous Arab tribes, the Turcomans whose numbers increased in Syria as a result of the Mongol invasion, and the Kurds whose power was waning under the new Mamlūk order. Baybars had to deal first with the Bedouins' anarchism that had prevailed unhindered in Upper Egypt since al-Šāliḥ Ayyūb's death in 647/1249. A rebellion was successfully quelled in Qūṣ but the Bedouins' defeat was not decisive as they were to challenge the Mamlūk government again and again throughout the Mamlūk period. Bedouin unrest in Syria could cause the sultanate great harm, especially because it might have encouraged the Mongols and their Armenian and Frankish allies to invade Syria. Furthermore, the Bedouins held the trump card of deserting to Mongol territory. This threat, however, became pointless with the signing of the peace treaty between the Mamlūks and the Mongol Ilkhans in 723/1323. The policy of securing co-operation with the Bedouins through the political patronage of powerful chiefs had existed earlier in Syria, but the Mamlūks formalised this policy when Quṭuz appointed ʿĪsā ibn Muhannā (d. 684/1285), the head of the most powerful Bedouin tribe in the area, as *amīr al-ʿarab* (leader of the Bedouins) in Syria and granted him *iqṭāʿ*s. Baybars confirmed ʿĪsā's position and further strengthened the Bedouins' position as a functional group in the Mamlūk regime system by entrusting their chiefs with the duties of guarding the Syrian frontier with the Mongols, patrolling the roads, and securing the royal postal system and the espionage linked to it. The Turcomans who roamed in Syria and Palestine were integrated into the Mamlūk military machine, mainly as troops guarding the coast against possible Frankish attack. Therefore they were settled along the shore from Gaza to Lesser Armenia.²⁶

The strategic importance of Syria as a frontier zone with the Mongol Ilkhans dictated Baybars' policy towards the Crusader dominions along the Syro-Palestinian littoral, which threatened the free passage of the Mamlūk army and smooth communication between Egypt and Syria. There was also the theoretical danger of Frank–Mongol co-operation against the Mamlūks.

Another interest of the Mamlūks was to cripple Europe's lucrative independent commerce with the Levant and channel it to Egypt under the Mamlūk government's direct control. Baybars conducted intensive military campaigns against the Crusaders with the goal of eliminating the Frankish presence in the region. Owing to the fear of support reaching the Franks from the sea or of a renewed Crusader attack from that direction – as was to take place in 670/1271 when Lord Edward, son of King Henry III of England, led a Crusader force to Acre and gained limited co-operation with the Ilkhanid Mongols – Baybars had the outer shore cities destroyed and their harbours rendered useless.²⁷ Cesarea, Arsuf and Haifa (665/1265), Jaffa and Antioch (667/1268), and Ascalon (669/1270) were all demolished. On the other hand, Safed (666/1266) and the important strongholds of Shaqīf Tīrūn (Cave de Tyrun), Ḥiṣn al-Akrād (Krak des Chevaliers) and Ḥiṣn 'Akkār (Bibelaca), all located inland, were repaired and manned with Muslim garrisons. These inland strongholds served as the military rearguard in the Mamlūk war against the Mongols and as part of the regime's inspection bases against insubordinate elements in Syria.

Baybars' foreign and overseas alliances were patterned to gain support against the Ilkhanid Mongols and the Crusaders, as well as to ensure the sultanate's commercial interests in the international trade system. The long-distance lucrative trade system stretched from western India, the outlet of both Indian and Chinese produce, to Europe, as far as the Low Countries and the Baltic. The Mongol conquest in Asia revived the transcontinental trade routes between China and Europe via Anatolia, and left the Mamlūk sultanate, for about a century, with only marginal profits from the major commercial network.²⁸ Baybars, and all subsequent Mamlūk governments, invested considerable efforts in maintaining Mamlūk influence in eastern Anatolia in order to disrupt the caravan route through Iran, and protect Mamlūk control of the eastern and western shores of the Red Sea to secure the Indian trade.

Baybars exploited internal rivalries in Europe to his advantage, mainly the confrontations between the papacy and the House of Hohenstaufen. In 660/1261 he resumed the traditional commercial relations that Egypt previously had with Sicily. Friendly relations with Manfred, the Hohenstaufen ruler of Sicily, who was at odds with the pope for his support of Charles of Anjou's candidacy for ruler of Sicily, might have served Baybars in disrupting the sea-links of the papacy and France with Lesser Armenia and the Mongol Ilkhanate. In 662/1262 a commercial agreement was reached with James of Aragon (610–75/1213–76) and in 665/1266 another with King Alfonso X of Castile (650–83/1252–84). Trade relations were maintained with Marseilles and the Italian maritime cities of Venice and Genoa that dealt with the import of

Mamlūk slaves from the Crimea to Egypt. In 663/1264, Baybars received a delegation from Charles of Anjou which signified European recognition of the Mamlūk sultanate as a great power in the Middle East and signalled the weakening of European support of the Crusaders.²⁹

The tripartite alliance Baybars forged with the Golden Horde and Byzantium, driven by their common enmity towards the Mongol Ilkhanate, was decisive for the Mamlūk sultanate. Michael Palaeologus (r. 651–81/1253–82), the Byzantine emperor, viewed the Mongols' control of eastern Anatolia as a threat to his eastern territories. The Ilkhans' alliance with Lesser Armenia also linked them to the conflict between the papacy and Byzantium over the Church's sphere of influence. Berke Khān (r. 654–65/1256–66), the ruler of the Golden Horde who had recently converted to Islam, had an open conflict with Hülegü as early as 660/1260. Consequently he sought a strategic peace with Byzantium in order to recover the income he had lost because of the interruption of trade with Iran. The alliance with the Mamlūk sultanate was to harass the Ilkhans with the threat of a pincer movement on two fronts. This strategy undoubtedly weakened the Ilkhans' motivation for a large-scale invasion of Syria. The Mamlūk army was also reinforced by the considerable addition of manpower of the Wāfidiyya, the Mongol and Turkish soldiers who had deserted the Ilkhanate for Egypt in two waves, in 662–4/1262–4 and 665–6/1266–7; the former were under Berke Khān's orders.³⁰ The alliance with the Mamlūk sultanate that was continued by Berke's successor, Mongke Timur (r. 666–79/1267–80), allowed the Mamlūks the purchase of strategic commodities, but more vital were the Turkish slaves from the Qipchak steppes. Since the overland slave trade routes through the Caucasus and eastern Anatolia were controlled by the Ilkhanids, Egypt depended overwhelmingly on the maritime routes. As part of the friendly relationship, Michael Palaeologus agreed to allow passage through the Bosphorus for Genoese vessels carrying Mamlūk slaves from the markets in the Crimea, then part of the Golden Horde territories, to Egypt.³¹

In spring 676/1277, Baybars took advantage of a Turcoman revolt against the Mongols in the Taurus highlands to invade eastern Anatolia. He defeated a Mongol army near Elbistan and marched on Kayseri where he was enthroned, but he chose to withdraw before Mongol reinforcements arrived because he could not rely on the fickle alliance he had with the local Turcomans and Saljuqs. The same policy was adopted in 675/1276, when Baybars exploited inter-dynastic conflicts in Christian Nubia to interfere and draw it under Mamlūk influence, thus renewing Nubian–Egyptian commercial relations that had been disturbed in 671/1272.

After about two years behind the nominal rule of Baybars' sons, Baraka (Berke) Khān and Salāmish, Qalāwūn took power in 678/1279. Al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn's reign was the continuation of Baybars' with regard to the consolidation and development of the Mamlūk political and military systems. The acceleration of the militarisation process in the administration was yet another aspect of institutional development during Qalāwūn's reign. For the first time the vizierate was assigned to a Mamlūk *amīr*, Sanjar al-Shujā'ī in 682/1283. Mamlūk patronage of Islamic institutions was manifested during Qalāwūn's rule by the persecution of Christians and the erection of his monumental complex in Fāṭimid Cairo. This included Qalāwūn's mausoleum, a *madrasa* and a hospital for the Muslim population of Cairo and its environs.³²

In 680/1281, the Ilkhan Abagha despatched a large force headed by his brother, Mongke Timur, into Syria that was routed by the Mamlūk army near Ḥimṣ.³³ Aḥmad Tegüder, Abagha's brother who ascended the throne in 681/1282, sought peace with the Mamlüks but was rejected outright by Qalāwūn, probably because his reign was still too insecure to withstand the army's disapproval of his peace policy. The victory over the Mongols enabled the Mamlüks to resume the war against the Christians. Between 684/1285 and 689/1290, Qalāwūn initiated military campaigns against Crusader outposts, ignoring the truces signed with some of them before the battle of Ḥimṣ, and by the end of his reign only Acre survived. Consecutive Mamlūk campaigns in 682/1283 and 683/1284 were mounted against Lesser Armenia, officially because of its participation in the battle of Ḥimṣ alongside the Mongols, but practically it was for its wood and iron, and to disrupt the Genoese–Ilkhanid commercial alliance conducted through the Armenian port of Āyās. In 684/1285 Qalāwūn concluded a truce with King Leon II that guaranteed an annual tribute and secured the safe passage of slave imports from the Golden Horde to Egypt through Armenian land. Earlier, in 680/1281, when this land route was still closed, Qalāwūn concluded a treaty with Michael VIII of Byzantium to secure the slave trade through the Bosphorus.³⁴

Genoese–Mamlūk relations were based on mutual dependence on the slave trade from the Black Sea regions to the Mamlūk sultanate. Genoa gained supremacy in western trade in the Levant and the Mamlūk sultanate augmented the vital manpower for its Mamlūk system. However, the Genoese penetration into the Mongol Ilkhanate and the introduction of an alternative route between India and Europe through the Persian Gulf created competition with Mamlūk lucrative trade. To overcome this competition, Qalāwūn reacted with restraint and issued a general proclamation of *amān* (safe conduct) in 687/1288, which offered the European merchants security, fair

treatment, port facilities and commercial incentives. In 689/1290 Qalāwūn re-established friendly relations with the Genoese, granting them a stronger commercial position in Egypt.³⁵ Qalāwūn also put the rivalries between the Byzantines and the Ilkhanids, and the Genoese and the Venetians, to his full advantage. Qalāwūn's intervention in Nubia and Yemen was designed to guarantee the sultanate's trade in the Red Sea as part of the overall notion he had inherited from Baybars of the sultanate's position as a great power in the Middle East and as the intersection between Europe and South-East Asia.

Mamlūk factional power struggles

Qalāwūn's son, al-Ashraf Khalīl, ascended the sultanate in Ramaḍān 689/September 1290. About six months later, he captured Acre, the last Crusader port and capital of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, and brought the Crusader presence in the Levant to an end. After Acre's fall, enthusiasm for Crusading in Europe decreased and the naval cities had a strong interest to resume their commercial contacts with the Mamlūks. In 690/1291, al-Ashraf concluded a treaty with Venice, and in 692/1293 with Alfonso III, king of Aragon, which allowed the import of war materials.

In spite of his military achievements, al-Ashraf did not prove himself a talented and prudent politician with regard to Mamlūk factionalism. When, in 693/1293, he designed a land survey, in which Qalāwūn's high-ranking *amīrs* were to lose their wealth and positions, they murdered him (693/1293). Seventeen years of political unrest followed al-Ashraf's assassination. The conspirators failed to place their candidate, Baydarā, on the throne. Kitbughā, one of Qalāwūn's Mongol *mamlūks* and head of the loyalist faction that included the Wāfidiyya troops, installed Qalāwūn's eight-year-old son, Muḥammad, as nominal sultan. About a year later, Kitbughā took the sultanate but unrest jeopardised his reign because of the army's intolerance towards the predominance of the non-Mamlūk Wāfidiyya. After an attempt on his life in 696/1296, Kitbughā retired to Syria, and Lājīn, his vice-regent, took the sultanate.

Al-Manṣūr Lājīn's reign was dominated by his conflict with his supporters on the grounds of the cadastral survey (*rawk*) he initiated in Egypt.³⁶ The *ḥalqa* and the *amīrs*' shares in the cultivated lands of Egypt were reduced to half in this *rawk*, from twenty to ten twenty-fourths, while the sultan's share of four twenty-fourths remained untouched. One twenty-fourth was kept as a reserve to compensate those who were dissatisfied with their new allocations and the remaining nine twenty-fourths were assigned for the establishment of a new *ḥalqa* that was planned to support Lājīn's rule. Lājīn was murdered before he

completed his *rawk*, and the surplus *iqṭāʿ*'s were divided among the magnates. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was brought back from exile in Kerak and reinstated in the sultanate (698/1299). His precarious position under two senior *amīrs*, Salār al-Manṣūri and Baybars al-Jāshinkīr, pushed him to abdicate in 708/1308 to Kerak.

Despite the internal unrest, the magnates did not relinquish Mamlūk strategic interests in Anatolia, combining political manoeuvres with military operations to achieve them. The Mamlūks supported separatists and anarchists against the Mongol garrison in the area. They provided assistance to the Mongol general, Sulamish, who in 699/1298 rebelled against the Ilkhan Ghazān and in 705/1305 a few hundred of the Mongol troops garrisoned in Cilicia were encouraged to defect to Egypt. The successful offensive against the Mongols in Anatolia, however, was set back because of the internal strife within the sultanate where military elements of Mongol origin were involved. In 698/1298, the vicegerent of Damascus, Qibjaq, who actually was the son of a *silāḥdār* (arms bearer) from the Ilkhanid court, defected with other prominent *amīrs* to the Ilkhan territory out of fear for their lives from Lājīn's vicegerent, Mankūtamur. With Qibjaq's inspiration, Ghazān invaded Syria in 699/1299. While encamped in Gaza, the Mamlūk army was shaken by a plot by the Mongol Oirat (*uwayrātiyya*) Wāfidiyya to murder the sultan and reinstate al-ʿĀdil Kitbughā. The rebellion was quelled and hundreds of Wāfidiyya soldiers were killed. When the Mamlūk army arrived at Wādī al-Khaznadār, it was too exhausted to engage in combat and retreated in disarray to Egypt, leaving Syria open to Ghazān's army. However, as in previous occupations of Syria, the Mongol army soon retreated, leaving Qibjaq and a Mongol general, Qutlūshāh, as joint governors of Damascus (699/1300). From his new position, Qibjaq negotiated his return to the Mamlūk sultanate. In 702/1302 two groups of Mamlūk *amīrs* defected to Ghazān and once again encouraged him to conquer Syria. In April 703/1303 he sent his general Qutlūshāh into Syria, but his army was routed at Marj al-Ṣuffār, near Damascus. With Ghazān's death in spring 704/1304, real danger from the Mongols no longer existed.

The Mamlūks' policy towards the Copts, the local Christians in Egypt, was a matter of criticism and conflict between the '*ulamā*' and the masses, and the Mamlūk ruling elite. Many Copts were employed as clerks in the financial bureaux of the sultans and *amīrs*. The latter were willing to overlook the financial power and influence the Copts accumulated in their service, because they benefited from their professional skills in the tax collection from their *iqṭāʿ*'s and the management of their income from other sources. Coptic

office-holders aroused general discontent because they were identified with unpopular Mamlūk tax policies, and because of the wealth they amassed under Mamlūk patronage. In 700/1301 the two powerful *amīrs*, Baybars al-Jāshinkīr and Salār, were pushed to implement an unprecedented discriminatory policy against the Copts. The direct trigger for this policy was the criticism the Maghribi vizier, who arrived in Cairo, waged against the Mamlūks for their liberal policies towards the *ahl al-dhimma*. In fact, a year earlier, the Mamlūks were defeated by the Mongols in the battle of Wādī al-Khaznadār. The public riots, incited by the *‘ulamā’*, forced the two *amīrs* to issue a ban on employing Copts. As a result, many individuals converted to Islam for appearance’s sake in order to retain their offices; mass conversion did not occur. The new converts not only did not sever their connections with the Christian community, but also interceded with their Mamlūk patrons on their co-religionists’ behalf. The Copts were further used as a bridge in the diplomatic relations between the Mamlūks and the Europeans that were vital for Egypt’s transit trade.³⁷

*Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s third reign, the ‘Golden Age’
of the Mamlūk sultanate*

When al-Nāṣir Muḥammad attained the sultanate for the third time in 709/1310, the Crusader principalities and a serious threat of a Crusade from Europe no longer existed. Since their defeat at Marj al-Ṣuffar, the Mongols had not made any serious attempt to attack Syria. As early as Baybars’ occupation of Kayseri in 676/1277, the Mamlūks understood that nurturing Mamlūk influence through inter-state politics rather than a direct rule in eastern Anatolia was a more realistic policy. In 723/1323 a treaty was concluded between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Abū Sa‘īd, the Mongol Ilkhan. Their relations, however, remained cold until 728/1328, when the two countries opened commercial and cultural exchange relationships. With the collapse of the Ilkhanate, after Abū Sa‘īd’s death (735/1335), a new state system emerged in Anatolia that enhanced the Mamlūks’ strategy of interference and led to the establishment of buffer zones of Turcoman principalities against invaders and nomad incursions which would remain intact until the end of the sultanate in 923/1517. The Saljuq vassals of the Ilkhanids were ousted from central Anatolia by the Qaramānids and their principality created an outer buffer zone for the Mamlūk sultanate. In 738/1337, Qaraja ibn Dhū ‘l-Qādir (or Dhū al-Qadr), the leader of the Turcoman clan of Bözöq, seized Elbistan, which was under Ilkhanid protectorate, and obtained a certificate recognising him as vicegerent from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Cilicia was captured in 760/1359 and became a

sultanate province. In 780/1378, the Turcoman Yüregir-oghlu Ramaḍān founded the principality of Ramaḍān and acknowledged Mamlūk suzerainty. The Dhū 'l-Qādirid and Ramaḍānid principalities were the immediate neighbours of the Mamlūk sultanate and served as its inner buffer zone.³⁸

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad invested efforts to secure Mamlūk control in the Ḥijāz. Al-Nāṣir renovated the Ka'ba, regularly supplied grain to the Ḥijāz and on three occasions during his reign, in 713/1313, 720/1320 and 732/1332, carried out the *ḥajj*, demonstrating Mamlūk commitment to the Holy Places. Expeditionary armies were repeatedly despatched to put an end to the feuds between the Sharīfs of Mecca and Medina to secure Mamlūk formal suzerainty against the rival posturing of Ilkhan Öljeitü and the Rasūlids of Yemen for a symbolic presence in the Holy Places. Mamlūk relations with Yemen remained ambivalent and tenuous after the failure of a Mamlūk attempt, in 725/1325, to intervene in succession feuds. Mamlūk expeditions were sent to Nubia in 715/1315 and 723/1323, with the purpose of checking on the Bedouins in the region, since a permanent Mamlūk prefect and a garrison were only maintained in the Red Sea port of 'Aydḥāb. In Tripoli and Tunis support was extended to the Ḥafṣid Abū Zakariyyā' Yaḥyā in exchange for nominal Mamlūk domination. Expanding Mamlūk influence from Arabia to North Africa contributed not only to the Mamlūk sultanate's position as a great power in the Muslim world, but also to the consolidation of Egypt's place in the long-distance trade. It secured the flow of African gold, with which the Mamlūks paid for the Indian lucrative commodities.

To secure Egypt's place in the Mediterranean trade, al-Nāṣir sent several expeditions to Lesser Armenia in order to enforce the tribute payment that had been agreed upon in 696/1297, and, more important, to disrupt Mongol long-distance trade to Europe via Anatolian ports. During the 738/1337 expedition, Sīs, the Armenian capital, was laid waste, but Lesser Armenia was not conquered until 777/1375. Envoys were exchanged between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the king of Aragon with the purpose of bringing Catalan merchants to Egypt. They were granted commercial privileges, and pilgrims were allowed access to Christian shrines. The papal trade sanctions against the sultanate were circumvented by clandestine trade with Genoa and Pisa through Cyprus.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's long and prosperous reign might be explained not only by the sultanate's peaceful foreign relations, but also by policies he adopted to secure a strong rule for himself. Upon assuming control in Cairo, al-Nāṣir eliminated both the Maṣṣūrī *amīrs* who had limited his authority during his earlier reigns and the disaffected Maṣṣūrī *amīrs* in Syria who

supported him, with only a handful managing to escape. He bestowed their positions, ranks and part of their wealth on his trusted *mamlūks* from the small corps he had been able to amass during his second reign and exile in Karak. Al-Nāṣir skilfully used this early period of transition to implement his plan for a general land survey (*rawk*), since his own *amīrs* were not yet firmly established to reject it, as the magnates had previously done with Lājīn's in 697/1298. Egypt's land survey (715/1315) was preceded by a pilot survey in the province of Damascus (713/1313). According to this tax reform, two major taxes were to be levied by the *muqta'* and were only applied to cultivated lands, the *kharāj*, the tax on agricultural produce, and the *jizya* or *jawālī*, the annual poll-tax imposed on the non-Muslim inhabitants of the sultanate. Whereas Lājīn did not change the sultan's share in Egypt's cultivated lands during the cadastral survey of 697/1298, al-Nāṣir increased it from four twenty-fourths to ten twenty-fourths. The remaining fourteen twenty-fourths were reserved for the *amīrs* and *ḥalqa* soldiers. Since the sultan had already controlled the monopoly on emeralds and natron, and the *matjar* (the state commercial office), he became involved in import and export activities in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and great dealings in grain, sugar and textiles based on the crops produced on his landed estates.³⁹ The abolition of the post of *nā'ib al-saltāna*, the vicegerent, in 726/1326 and the suspension of the vizierate during the periods 714–23/1314–23 and 731–40/1331–9 transferred the financial responsibilities and power from the state to the sultan.

While the *rawk* immediately reinforced the sultan's power, it had far-reaching ramifications for the army. Although the *iqṭā's* they received were formally worth the same as their previous holdings, in practice their income was reduced because it was no longer based solely on the *kharāj* tax and was divided in various locations in Upper and Lower Egypt in order to curb the *muqta'*'s influence and his regional power. The *amīrs* had to employ more clerks in their bureaux to collect the taxes, and to add insult to injury the Coptic peasants exploited the decentralisation of tax collection and evaded it by moving from village to village, declaring that they had already paid it elsewhere. Muslim circles, especially the Shāfi'ī '*ulamā'*', criticised the new tax system as a conspiracy instigated by Coptic clerks in order to help their co-religionists and ruin the Muslim government. The *ḥalqa* troops' *iqṭā'*, which had already been reduced in the *rawk* of 697/1298, became insufficient for livelihood and was regarded as supplementing income only. Elderly and disabled were already among the *ḥalqa* ranks during al-Nāṣir's time. Under his successors, the *ajnād al-ḥalqa* resorted to relinquishing their *iqṭā's* for payment (*nuzūl*) and artisans and peddlers and even children took their

place. Having more or less acclimatised to the dismal situation of the *ḥalqa*, sultans in the ninth/fifteenth century routinely preferred to offer their soldiers the choice of a 'substitute' payment (*badal*) instead of going on expeditions.

Al-Nāṣir's expanded resources were generously utilised to build a great Mamlūk household, to maintain patronage relationships with influential sectors both inside and outside the Mamlūk elite, and to develop public and private projects that legitimised his royal authority. Al-Nāṣir's Mamlūk household had been significantly increased through the systematic purchase of new recruits, preferably Mongols and Turks, at high prices in order to encourage their import to Egypt. In order to buy his *mamlūks*' loyalty, he showered them with material plenty upon their arrival, while earlier sultans, particularly Baybars and Qalāwūn, had based the training of their *mamlūks* on stringent discipline, military professionalism and slow, hierarchical advancement. For the first time, royal estates were given as *iqṭā'* to new recruits lodged in the Citadel barracks in order to supplement their income. To compensate the prominent *amīrs* for their reduced income as a result of the 715/1315 *rawk*, al-Nāṣir granted them generous unrecorded grants, gifts and additional *iqṭā'*s on an individual basis. The size of the *iqṭā'* of his *amīr* Bashtāk was kept secret in order not to arouse the envy of Qawṣūn, his rival. This reward policy characterised the informal patron-client relationship on which al-Nāṣir sought to achieve autocratic rule. In addition to his prodigal generosity, al-Nāṣir's relationship with his *amīrs* and office-holders was characterised by suspicion and manipulation which often culminated in sudden arrests and executions. Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī was appointed governor of Damascus in 712/1312 and, in effect, served as governor-general of Syria for about twenty-eight years. Nevertheless, in 741/1340 he lost the sultan's favour and was put to death. Baktamur al-Sāqī (cupbearer), whose house was frequented by al-Nāṣir, where meals were cooked and served personally by Baktamur's own wife, was granted far-reaching authority that almost equalled the sultan's. In 732/1332 he and his son died under suspicious circumstances on their way back from the *ḥajj*.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's expenditure on his personal household was unprecedented. His royal harem was enormous, including an inordinate number of white concubines (*jawārī*) and *muwalladāt*, women of mixed extraction. Al-Nāṣir's generous remuneration policy towards the Bedouins of the Banū Muḥannā in northern Syria was part of the efforts to bribe them into severing their relationship with the Ilkhanate and remain under Mamlūk authority. Al-Nāṣir surpassed his predecessors in the exorbitant prices he paid for the prime Arabian horses they supplied.⁴⁰ A special bureau, established to oversee al-Nāṣir's building expenditures, reveals the extent of his ambitious plans for

the irrigation system and construction in Cairo. Al-Nāṣir had all government buildings in the Citadel and most of the hippodromes in Cairo demolished and replaced by new ones. New palaces for some of his *amīrs*, wives and slave-girls were built in Cairo. Al-Nāṣir's *amīrs*, of whom only a few were mobilised for expeditions, were granted land in Cairo and its environs and exempted from land and commercial taxes to encourage their involvement in construction and business. The markets, bathhouses, mills and tenement buildings that had been constructed in the western areas of Cairo became the centres of flourishing quarters.⁴¹

Signs of a deep crisis were already noticeable during the last decade of al-Nāṣir's reign. Royal expenditures exceeded revenues and threatened to spin out of control. State intervention in private enterprise that had been introduced by the *nāzir al-khāṣṣ*, Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr, as early as 710/1310, became routine under Sharaf al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh, known as al-Nashuw, who was appointed to the post in 731/1331. Under al-Nashuw, compulsory sales and purchases (*ṭarḥ* and *rimāya*), confiscation from office-holders who were accused of channelling state resources into their pockets, and profits from coin debasement, randomly complemented and often even surpassed the sultan's treasury income. Merchants were compelled to buy from the government commodities such as wood, iron, beans and clover at prices of its own choosing, thus promoting the royal monopoly on commerce. The abolition of tax exemption on trade and production that al-Nāṣir had granted his *amīrs* and the regulation of non-competitive, fixed prices on grain diminished the magnates' competition with royal enterprises. The magnates who maintained patronage relationships with the financial administration officials, the '*ulamā*' and the large population brought about the end of al-Nashuw's career by execution in 740/1339.⁴²

The turbulent reign of the Qalāwūnids

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's descendants ruled from 741/1341 until 784/1382, but on the whole the magnates, who had accumulated great wealth and power during his reign, held the real power. Most of the twelve Qalāwūnid sultans who reigned during this period were inexperienced and were placed on the throne directly from the harem. All but one, al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl who died of illness, were deposed by the *amīrs* and seven were murdered after their deposition. Al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (r. 748–52/1347–51; 755–62/1354–61) and al-Ashraf Sha'bān (r. 764–78/1363–77) were the only Qalāwūnid sultans who succeeded in recruiting Mamlūk households of their own, owing to their comparatively long reigns. Yet their *mamlūk* households were smaller than those of the

dominant *amīrs*' and each of them was murdered when he attempted to rule autonomously. During his second reign, al-Nāṣir Ḥasan tried to counterbalance the *amīrs*' power by encouraging the advancement of Mamlūks' sons (*awlād al-nās*) to prominent emirates and province governorships.⁴³ When the *amīrs*' position was threatened and the entire *mamlūk* system was jeopardised, Ḥasan was murdered by his favourite Mamlūk Yalbughā al-'Umarī. Yalbughā acted as vicegerent between 762/1360 and 768/1366 until he himself was murdered by his own recruits. Al-Ashraf Sha'bān carried out a land survey in 777/1376, in which members of the Qalāwūnid House, the *asyād*, were allocated rich *iqṭā'*s in Upper Egypt and the vicinity of Cairo.⁴⁴ Al-Ashraf's redistribution of state resources contributed to the general dissatisfaction in the army and led to his murder.

In spite of their attempts, the grand *amīrs* who held power behind the Qalāwūnids could not seize the sultanate because, in their bid for power, they bribed the low-ranking *mamlūks* with money and privileges to encourage them to shift their allegiance from one faction to another. However, the extensive mobility of *mamlūks* between the factions left the *amīrs* uncertain regarding the support they had organised for their rule.⁴⁵ The incessant factional struggles among the magnates over control of the sultanate and the frequent reshuffling of their short-lived coalitions led them to exploit their senior positions to accumulate wealth rapidly.⁴⁶ Mismanagement on their part and general weakness of the government damaged the Mamlūk sultanate's economic and military capacity, thereby undoing al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's achievements within a generation, and aggravating the problems he left for his descendants. When the country was simultaneously hit by natural disasters, such as plagues, floods and droughts, recovery was further hindered and the sultanate entered into a prolonged period of general stagnation. Against this background, the positive trade balance which the sultanate had with Europe during this period was of great importance to the Mamlūk economy. Formal Venetian trade with the sultanate was restored in 745/1345, and other European cities soon followed suit. The renewal of European commerce with the sultanate was the result of political changes in the Black Sea area, namely the disintegration of the Mongol Ilkhanate and the rise of the Turcoman states (*begliks*) in Anatolia under Mamlūk influence.

In spite of the positive trade balance and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's improvement of Egypt's agricultural infrastructure, the sultan's revenues fell drastically while the sultan's household expenditures increased significantly. For almost fifteen years after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's death, his harem maintained an informal say in government when *iqṭā'* allowances were granted through

women's and eunuchs' mediation. They also gained access to the sultan's treasury and other private enterprises such as sugar presses and flour mills. The Mamlūk magnates were prepared to allow the Qalāwūnid sultans to squander a portion of the sultan's revenues on the harem as long as they could control the rest.⁴⁷

Another sector that depleted the country's resources was the Bedouins, whose constant disruptions went unhindered, while the government failed to impose its authority upon them. Immediately after al-Nāṣir's death, the rivalry between al-Faḍl and al-Muḥannā over the *imrat* al-ʿArab erupted into open conflict, thereby rendering highways in Syria unsafe.⁴⁸ In 753/1352 the clans of Muḥannā ibn ʿĪsā numbered 110, and each held the title of *amīr* and an *iqṭāʿ*. In the Sharqiyya, an eastern province in the Nile Delta, the Thaʿāliba tribes abandoned their responsibility for the *barīd* maintenance and joined the al-ʿĀʾid Bedouins, the recalcitrant rebels of the region. Feuds over domination in Upper Egypt between Bedouin tribes, traditionally divided into Qaysis and Yemenis, increased between 744/1343 and 754/1353. The Yemeni tribes of ʿArak, Juhayna and Balī disrupted communications and harassed government functionaries in their attempt to gain *mashyakha* (Bedouin headmanship) in Upper Egypt. Upper Egypt was under the de facto control of Muḥammad ibn Wāṣil al-Aḥḍab, chief of the ʿArak tribe, and the local Mamlūk functionaries became dependent on him for the collection of the *kharāj*. In 754/1353, when the grand *amīrs* despatched a large expeditionary force against the Yemeni tribes, their power was temporarily curbed, but this did not change their growing prominence in Upper Egypt. Al-Aḥḍab, who extricated himself unharmed from the Mamlūk attack, came to terms with the government and received the *mashyakha* in Upper Egypt. The alliance of the Mamlūk government with the Yemeni tribes immediately led to rebellions of the Qaysi tribes, the former allies of the Mamlūks. Consequently, around 760/1360, the ʿAydhāb–Qūṣ route was abandoned and Upper Egypt was no longer under firm control of the Mamlūks.⁴⁹

The bubonic plague, called the Black Death, which raged from 748/1347 to 750/1349, decimated between one quarter to one third of the Egyptian and Syrian populations, as it had in Europe.⁵⁰ Sixteen outbreaks of major epidemics that occurred in Egypt, and fifteen in Syria, from the 760s/1360s until the end of Mamlūk rule, prevented any demographic and economic recovery. It was at the height of the Black Death and the economic crisis that the Mamlūk magnates decided to call off all rivalries and set up a ruling body intended to represent a consensus amongst them. The new *majlis al-mashūra* (consultative council) consisted of nine *amīrs* led by a tenth who held the office of *raʾs nawba*

(head of guards). Although mutual suspicions remained among the magnates, the *majlis al-mashūra* set precedents for the restoration of a strong sultanate. The *majlis* kept the Qalāwūnid sultan in check: he was allowed a grant for his daily expenditures, all of the slave-girls were expelled from the Citadel and salaries of most of the officials were cut by a minimum of one half or two-thirds. When, in 754/1353, the economic crisis deepened, the *amīrs* were forced to relinquish the state's management to only one of them. As no one other than Amīr Shaykhū, who held then the *atābakiyya* (command in chief of the Mamlūk army) dared to assume the responsibility, the *majlis* members agreed to obey his decisions unconditionally. In order to bolster his special position, Shaykhū was given the title of *al-amīr al-kabīr* (the great *amīr*). It was only then that Shaykhū was able to take the large action described above, against the sultanic harem and the Bedouin tribes in Upper Egypt. During the following year, 755/1354, attacks against the Copts erupted throughout Egypt. Under pressure from the 'ulamā' and the masses, employment of Coptic clerks was forbidden, but more significant was that 25,000 *faddāns* (a land measure of approximately one acre) of *waqf* lands belonging to the Egyptian Churches were confiscated by the government (these drastic actions drove the Copts to mass conversion, thereby representing a significant stage in the ongoing process of conversion to Islam in Egypt). In 779/1377, Aynabak, who at this point held the post of *atābak al-'asākir* and *al-amīr al-kabīr*, decided to make his official residence in the Citadel, the government seat, thus signalling the *al-amīr al-kabīr*'s position in power. It was while serving as *al-amīr al-kabīr* and *atābak al-'asākir* that Barqūq gained independence from factional coalitions and built wide support for his rule. When he lodged his recruits in the Citadel and was the first *al-amīr al-kabīr* to mint coins bearing his emblem (*rank*), as sultans customarily did upon their ascent to power, in effect the House of Qalāwūn came to an end.

The Circassian era of the sultanate

Al-Zāhir Barqūq, the formation of the Circassian state

Barqūq's seizure of power in 784/1382 symbolises the restoration of the non-dynastic Mamlūk sultanate, and the move from a Turkish to a Circassian sultanate. Mamlūks of Circassian (Abkhāz) origin formed the majority in the army and the sultans were drawn from their numbers (except for two who were Albanian or Greek). Contemporary Mamlūk sources attribute to Barqūq a deliberate policy of bringing about a change in the army's ethnic

composition by purchasing Circassian *mamlūks* in great numbers and advancing them in preference to the Turks. The new Circassian regime was criticised by contemporaries, above all by the moralist historian al-Maqrīzī, who held them responsible for the breakdown of the traditional Islamic order, misrule and mismanagement. Despite the importance that contemporaries attributed to Barqūq's policies and ethnic animosities to explain the political and social changes in the sultanate, neither the actions of a sole actor nor an ethnic factor could generate such developments. They were rather the result of ongoing processes that took place in the sultanate.

The introduction of Circassians into the Mamlūk army began as early as Qalāwūn's reign, with the establishment of the Burjiyya corps. After Qalāwūn's death, they were active partners in the Mamlūk coalitions that twice installed al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in the sultanate, and Baybars al-Jāshinkīr in 708/1308.⁵¹

With his death, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad left a large Mamlūk household that had been systematically manned with Mongol and Turkish recruits. During al-Muẓaffar Ḥājji's rule (747–8/1346–7), the Circassians regained their dominance but were purged from the army by the Mongols and Turks who installed al-Nāṣir Ḥasan on the throne. The Circassians re-emerged in the 750s/1350s, when they formed the majority in the household of Yalbughā al-'Umarī, who was not a Circassian himself. The Yalbughāwiyya included over 1,800 recruits (*julbān*) and it was from their ranks that Barqūq rose to power and deposed the Qalāwūnid house, which under these circumstances became the symbol of the diminishing Turkish hegemony over the sultanate.

In contrast with the increasing influx of the Circassians into Egypt, the number of Turks steadily declined from the late 740s/1340s. The Middle East, like Europe, suffered a drastic depopulation during the Black Death. Its effects on the Mamlūk elite were far more severe than those suffered by the local population that was more immune to diseases.⁵² The population of the Golden Horde, the Turkish *mamlūks*' homeland, dwindled in the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century, inter alia in the wake of the Black Death. Succession struggles in the Golden Horde among the Jöchids' descendants of Chinggis Khān since the middle of the eighth/fourteenth century and struggles for domination between the Jöchids and the Timurids at the end of the century further depleted the Golden Horde's resources and population. Mamlūk sources reveal that during the early ninth/fifteenth century the Golden Horde became a wilderness and that export of Turkish *mamlūks* was forbidden. Circassians, by contrast, continued to reach Egypt without difficulty both as free men and as Mamlūks.

Barqūq's rise to power was the symptom of another process being undergone by the Mamlūk sultanate, namely the growth of the low-ranking *mamlūks*' power. Breaches of discipline and public protests, especially of the ruling sultan's new Mamlūk recruits, appeared, although sporadically, during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign, when they became used to material plenty.⁵³ During the forty years of rule of his Qalāwūnid descendants, the Mamlūks already possessed the power to lodge their own claims for a share in political decision-making together with the *amīrs*. Barqūq's meteoric rise from the service of the *asyād*, the ruling sultan's relatives, to the highest rank of *muqaddam alf* (commander of the one-thousand horsemen in the battlefield) and active partner in the bipartite rule behind al-Manṣūr 'Alī, within a mere four months (Muḥarram–Rabī' II 779/May–August 1377), is a reflection of the power accumulated by the *mamlūks* and the subsequent political chaos.⁵⁴

Barqūq was among the Yalbughāwiyya *mamlūks* who were imprisoned after the assassination of their master, Yalbughā al-'Umarī, in 767/1365. In 778/1377 he was in the service of Amir Qaraṭāy, who together with Aynabak was involved in the rebellion against al-Ashraf Sha'bān and his assassination. This rebellion was initiated by low-ranking *mamlūks*, and both Qaraṭāy and Aynabak themselves had been until recently low-ranking *mamlūks*. In Ṣafar 779/June 1377, Barqūq and an Ashrafī *mamlūk*, Baraka (Berke), were granted an emirate of forty for their part in murdering Qaraṭāy. About two months later, Barqūq and Baraka conspired against Aynabak and played an active role behind the scenes in the rule of al-Manṣūr 'Alī. In 783/1381, Barqūq managed to rid himself of Baraka and monopolised power as *al-amīr al-kabīr* and *atābak al-'asākir*, and in 784/1382 seized the sultanate.

In order to build a broad support for his rule, Barqūq carefully promoted the *mamlūks* from the rival Ashrafiyya faction (Baraka's followers) and his own peers from the Yalbughāwiyya, while putting the advancement of his own *mamlūks* in abeyance. The sources show that Barqūq, unlike his predecessors, revived the practice of the first sultans of graduating only one intake of *mamlūks* at a time after a long training period. Barqūq's conciliatory policy, however, left his rivals with the power to pose a credible threat to his rule, which indeed materialised in 791/1389, when Timurtāsh al-Ashrafī, called Mīntāsh, and Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī, the governors of Tripoli and Aleppo respectively, rebelled. In spite of the force of some 2,000 *mamlūks* he owned (he purchased about 5,000 *mamlūks* during his reign), Barqūq was ousted and the Qalāwūnid al-Ṣāliḥ Ḥājī (now with the new regnal title of al-Manṣūr) was reinstated in the sultanate. During this rebellion, Barqūq's previous painstaking efforts to restrict the *julbān*'s power were hampered. When many of his

veteran supporters deserted him to join the rebels, Barqūq had no choice but to man the vacant posts with new recruits. Furthermore, upon his return to power (792/1389), after about eight months of confinement in Karak, he quickly rid himself of the majority of his veteran opponents, replacing them with his own *mamlūks*. In order to secure the purchase and maintenance of his *julbān*, in 797/1395 Barqūq established an office, *diwān al-mufrad* ('Special Bureau', the bureau established especially for payment of the sultan's *mamlūks*), based on the lands previously held by the Qalāwūnids. The formation of this office was yet another step in the enhancement of the *julbān*'s power, for it formalised their status. As will be shown, new political and military measures would be necessary to curb their power.

Concomitant with the improvement in the *julbān* status was the growing involvement of the common people, *al-ʿamma*, in Mamlūk inter-factional struggles for rule. As early as 741/1341, during the power struggle that erupted immediately after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's death, the commoners were called by rival *amīrs* to fight alongside the *mamlūks* in their street scuffles.⁵⁵ With the increasing shifting of the low-ranking Mamlūks among the factions, the *amīrs* sought the commoners' support to keep the power balance. Barqūq cultivated good relations with the *ʿamma* to gain their support. In 781/1379, Barqūq prevented his ruling partner, Baraka, from forcing the rabble into corvé or meting out punishment on criminals and inciters among them. In the same year, the *ʿamma* stood firmly behind Barqūq when Īnāl al-Yūsufī, one of the grandees, rebelled, and they did so again in 782/1380, during Barqūq's struggle against Baraka, which left him as the sole power behind al-Ṣāliḥ Ḥājī. A turbulent marginal group within the *ʿamma* were the *ḥarāfīsh*, living on the fringes of the urban lumpen proletariat. They were miserably poor, vulgar Sufi beggars (*juʿaydiyya*) and manual labourers of works that the decent members of the community avoided for religious and social reasons. The early Mamlūk sultans distributed alms for their relief, while during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign they were occasionally rounded up for forced labour such as digging canals. During Barqūq's reign, the *ḥarāfīsh* gained recognition, and during the ninth/fifteenth century, through Mamlūk patronage, they gradually became organised into groups in Sufi orders, headed by shaykhs responsible for maintaining discipline and distribution of alms among them.⁵⁶

As Sufism became the main vehicle for the integration of the various groups of the population under Mamlūk patronage, the traditional positions of the professional *ʿulamā* and *faqīhs*, especially the Shāfiʿīs, as the leading upper class and agents of orthodox Islam, were eroded. High positions were no longer reserved exclusively for them and persons from the lower classes could

now rise to prominent positions through patronage relations and the practice of payment for nomination. The position of the *sharʿī qāḍīs* was impinged upon when the jurisdiction of the *ḥājibs* (chamberlains, or doorkeepers), who acted as delegates of the sultan, was extended to deal with matters beyond the military elite and the *dīwāns*, to matters traditionally dealt with according to the *sharʿa*.⁵⁷ In Barqūq's time, the *ḥājibs*' number was increased from three to five, and at one point during the ninth/fifteenth century reached eighty-six. By the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century, senior *amīrs* such as the *dawādār* acquired judicial knowledge and acted as judges. The platforms stationed at the gates of the grand *amīrs*' houses 'sold' justice to the larger population. The influential among the *julbān* employed military police to maintain order in their courts and enforce their decisions. Al-Ashraf Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (906–22/1501–16) tried on two occasions to centralise the judicial system and ban all courts but the *sharʿī*, but was soon compelled to yield to the *amīrs*' pressure and leave these courts active.

For some contemporary chroniclers, Barqūq's reign also marked the beginning of the sultanate's economic decline and signalled the move to copper currency as its salient characteristic. Indeed, in 783/1381 Barqūq ordered the minting of a copper coin but it was rejected by the market and it was only during Faraj's reign that the Mamlūk monetary system moved to copper in all business dealings. Scholars studying the Middle Eastern monetary system have identified changes in the global trading pattern and their effects on the bullion supply as the main reason for the crisis. Silver, and to a lesser extent other precious metals, reached the Levant in both bullion and currency from western Europe in exchange for manufactured goods, raw materials and Indian luxury commodities. Gold reached Egypt from the Sūdān and then was siphoned off to India and the Black Sea area in exchange for luxury goods and white slaves. During the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century, this trade balance was changed. The supply of gold from the Sūdān diminished because most of it reached Europe through Morocco and Tunisia. At the same time, silver disappeared from the market because of mining problems in Europe. In order to overcome the bullion shortage, the Mamlūk sultans tried to implement reforms in copper currency and fix a single exchange rate to reduce uncontrolled inflation, but market trends proved stronger and eventually went beyond their control. Only in 886/1486, during Qāytbāy's reign (872–901/1468–96), did the crisis come to an end when silver, copper and other metals returned to the market as a result of renewed mining in Europe.⁵⁸

Bullion flow and long-distance trading patterns, significant as they were, do not explain the decline in the domestic economies that were, in fact, the main

source of government income. Land revenues in Egypt dropped dramatically during the Circassian period. In 715/1315, during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's land survey, land revenues reached 9,428,289 *dīnār jayshī* (a monetary unit of account), rising to 9,584,284 in 777/1376, while during the Ottoman conquest they totalled only 1,800,000 dinars. Bedouinisation of rural areas in Lower and Upper Egypt might be one of the reasons behind this reduction in the area of cultivated land.⁵⁹ As mentioned earlier, Mamlūk authority in Upper Egypt was tenuous because of the Qaysi and Yemeni Bedouin strife over hegemony in the region.⁶⁰ Of the 24,000 *faddāns* that had been cultivated at Luxor according to al-Ashraf Sha'bān's survey in 777/1376, only 1,000 were cultivated in 786/1384. In order to keep the Arab tribes in check, Barqūq moved a fraction of the Berber Hawwāra tribe from the Delta to Girga in Middle Egypt. This move gave the Mamlūk government a respite during which order was restored in Upper Egypt, until the Hawwāra consolidated their power and again jeopardised Mamlūk control in the area. The Mamlūk government's decentralised system made it difficult to contain the Bedouins. Lower Egypt was divided into eight provinces (excluding Alexandria) and Upper Egypt into seven, each headed by a Mamlūk *amīr* of forty or ten, according to province size. When Barqūq was acting as *al-amīr al-kabīr* and *atābak al-'asākīr*, he had already tried to restore order by uniting the Egyptian provinces under three constituencies, each under the control of an *amīr* of one hundred. Alexandria, Damanhūr and Asyūṭ were the centres of their *niyābāt* (governorships). However, this system was quickly abandoned during the civil war that broke out after his death.⁶¹

Plague depopulation in Egypt was another factor affecting the destruction of agriculture. The lack of inheritance of the *iqṭā'* which resulted in its frequent transfer between different *muqta'*s, the scattering of *iqṭā'*s in various locations, and the filtering role played by the office-holders in the fiscal administration, all barred the peasants' demands for a better distribution of wealth between the landlords and themselves.⁶² Another reason for the suffering of the peasantry in Egypt was the neglect of the irrigation system as a result of the practice of purchasing appointments that was formalised in 745/1344. Prefects in Egypt did their utmost to recoup the money they had paid for the post, with interest. The dams' maintenance was thrust upon the villagers in the form of *corvé*, but since the government failed to provide instructions and the necessary technical facilities, the irrigation system collapsed. The sultans' efforts to repair it during the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century met with the opposition of the fief-holders, who claimed the responsibility for its maintenance and levied taxes for this purpose, but in practice they forced the

responsibility onto the farmers.⁶³ The impoverished farmers deserted their villages for the city, only to swell the numbers of penniless unemployed there.⁶⁴ Their influx into the cities kept urban population constant. The steady migration of refugees from the eastern parts of the Muslim world after the Mongol invasions of the seventh/thirteenth and late eighth/fourteenth centuries also enhanced the cities' populations and created a heavy burden on the state's resources.

There was no real change in the Mamlūk sultanate's foreign policy during Barqūq's reign. In Anatolia, the Turcoman states (*begliks*) continued to manoeuvre between Mamlūk suzerainty and autonomous rule in order to secure their existence, while the Mamlūks would not let them slip from their sphere of influence. In 789/1387, Timur Leng's conquests in the east had already included Mesopotamia. Barqūq reacted with preparations against the Mongol invaders and with a request to form a common front with the Ottomans and the Golden Horde. In 796/1394 Barqūq offered asylum to the Jalayirid ruler of Iraq, who fled before Timur, and led an army to al-Bīra on the Euphrates to confront Timur. Timur, however, withdrew, and Barqūq died before Timur resumed his plans to invade Syria.

After Barqūq's death in 801/1399, the sultanate was plunged into twelve years of civil war over power during which time Barqūq's achievements in restoring order in the sultanate collapsed. Mamlūk authority in Upper Egypt was nonexistent during the civil war. The Ottomans seized the opportunity to invade the sultanate's territory in south-eastern Anatolia, while in 803/1400 Timur Leng invaded Syria. Al-Nāṣir Faraj, Barqūq's eleven-year-old son, set out for Syria to expel the Timurid forces, but a rebellion fomented by a rival faction compelled the prominent *amīrs* in the force to return to Egypt with Faraj, leaving Damascus to Timur's depredations. In 803/1400, Timur left Syria and turned to Anatolia where he defeated the Ottoman sultan, Bāyezīd I, in Ankara (805/1402).

Faraj's rule (801–8/1399–1405; 808–15/1405–12) was prolonged because of the deep schisms inside the rival Mamlūk factions. Many contenders for rule were eliminated in the long inter-factional struggles which were centred in Syria. Faraj survived six campaigns against rebellious *amīrs* of different factions. Only in 812/1410 did Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī, the future sultan al-Mu'ayyad, and his rival Nawrūz al-Ḥafīẓī, the governor of Damascus, become allies and together they defeated and later executed Faraj (815/1412). In order to win broad support for their bipartite rule, they divided the realm. The sultanate was nominally given to the caliph al-Musta'in but Nawrūz retained Syria, and Shaykh, acting as *atābak al-'asākir*, acquired Egypt. After about seven months,

this settlement was broken by Shaykh, who deposed al-Mustaʿīn from both the sultanate and the caliphate and seized the sultanate.

*Al-Muʾayyad Shaykh, the establishment
of a new factional order*

Al-Muʾayyad's rise to power in 815/1412 confirmed the Mamlūks' rejection of dynastic succession. Henceforth, sultans handed down the sultanate to their descendants by will, but with the knowledge that after a very brief interregnum the young prince would be deposed. His replacement by one of the veteran *amīrs* was generally smooth and without bloodshed. The only attempt made by a sultan's son to establish an effective rule, when the rejection of the dynastic principle had long since become tradition, was that of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Qāyṭbāy's son (901–4/1495–8). Like al-Nāṣir Faraj, he was brutally killed by his father's *mamlūks*.

Al-Muʾayyad had to cope with the political disorder inside the sultanate and to rehabilitate its position in the international state order. Al-Muʾayyad led his first expedition (817/1414) to Syria to quell the rebellion of the governors headed by his former ally and rival, Nawrūz al-Ḥāfiẓī, who did not recognise the caliph's deposition and al-Muʾayyad's usurpation of the sultanate. In the following year, a second campaign was led to suppress the revolt of the Syrian governors that al-Muʾayyad himself had appointed. After Syria, al-Muʾayyad directed his efforts to the restoration of Mamlūk authority in eastern Anatolia, where a new political structure had emerged in the wake of the Timurid invasion. Although Timur's invasion contained the Ottoman advance into eastern Anatolia, it brought the Timurid clients, the Turcoman Āq Qoyunlu (White Sheep) to Diyār Bakr, and the Qārā Qoyunlu (Black Sheep) to Mesopotamia, in close proximity with the Mamlūk sultanate. The threat of a new Timurid invasion pushed the Ottomans to substitute their emerging conflict with the Mamlūks over Anatolia with interference in the politics of the Turcoman principalities to bring them under their protection, while the Mamlūks stuck to the pre-Timurid state order in Anatolia. Trapped between the two great powers, the Qaramānid and Dhū al-Qādirid *begliks* manoeuvred to obtain gains from the situation. Thus, Meḥmed Beg of Dhū al-Qādir took advantage of the anarchy that broke out in the sultanate after Barqūq's death, and placed his principality under Ottoman protectorate. Upon his accession, al-Muʾayyad restored the Dhū al-Qādirid allegiance to the Mamlūks, while the Ottoman sultan Meḥmed I conquered Konya and reinstated the Qaramānid ruler Meḥmed Beg as his client. Qaramān's formal annexation was avoided in order to satisfy Timur's son, Shāh Rūkh (807–50/1405–75), and the Mamlūks,

who insisted on preserving their outer buffer zone untouched. In 822/1419, al-Mu'ayyad invaded the Qaramānid territories; Kayseri surrendered and Mamlūk suzerainty was recognised again. The Mamlūks proceeded to Konya, Nijde and Laranda, but then it was decided to retreat to Aleppo. This pragmatic decision, much like Baybars' in 675/1277, indicates that the Mamlūks recognised their power limits and remained careful not to risk their forces in expeditions far from their Syrian bases.

Domestically, the sultanate was in poor condition; the state institutions in the provinces did not function, the currency was unstable, epidemics of plague, which reoccurred in 818–19/1415–16 and in 824/1420, caused grain riots.⁶⁵ In 820/1417 the *ustādār* (majordomo) Fakhr al-Dīn ibn Abī 'l-Faraj, who was responsible for *dīwān al-mufrad*, personally went with his clients and *ḥalqa* soldiers to levy the revenues in Lower Egypt, and led a punitive expedition to Upper Egypt against the unruly Bedouin tribes. The population was compelled to purchase the booty at prices of the government's choice. Confiscation of the property of office-holders, merchants and other sectors was frequently implemented to replenish the treasury.

Al-Mu'ayyad's ambition to reform the army, much as Barqūq's, did not materialise. His attempts to balance the Circassian element in the army by importing Turkish slaves succeeded only to a very limited degree. The ranks of the *amīrs* were filled with Turks, mainly with Barqūq's veteran *mamlūks*, and the majority of the army remained Circassian. The enhancement of the *julbān*'s political position, which had eroded the *amīrs*' authority under the Qalāwūnids, was checked from al-Mu'ayyad's reign onward, by a separation that was maintained between the *amīrs*' level and the sultan's new recruits. The Circassian sultans mainly filled the *amīrs*' ranks with veteran *mamlūks* who had not grown up in their own households and it was from among them that the new sultan also came to power. This might explain the ninth/fifteenth-century phenomenon of *mamlūks* reaching a ripe old age while still holding senior positions. The *julbān*, on the other hand, were hardly promoted to emirates even after a long service under their master, the ruling sultan, and therefore they lacked experienced leadership to lead them to hold on to power upon his death. In 824/1421, upon al-Mu'ayyad's death, his young and inexperienced *julbān* were expelled from the Citadel and left to their own devices in Cairo. The *julbān* of al-Ashraf Barsbāy (r. 825–42/1422–38), al-Zāhir Jaqmaq (r. 842–57/1438–53), al-Ashraf Īnāl (r. 857–65/1453–60) and al-Zāhir Khushqadam (r. 865–72/1461–7) were all expelled from the Citadel without resistance because they displayed no political sophistication in their negotiations with the veteran *mamlūks*. After their expulsion, most of the *julbān* were

absorbed into the *amīrs*' households, where they acquired their military and political experience, and achieved seniority in the Mamlūk system. It was during their service in the *amīrs*' households that personal relationships between the *julbān* and other veteran *mamlūks* were formed in addition to those acquired during their training period in the Citadel barracks. These relationships were later important in the make-up of the *amīrs*' stratum of the Circassian regime. Furthermore, these relationship networks also integrated the *amīrs*' households into the factional fabric of the coalitions that supported the government.

The departure of the Circassian Mamlūks from the early pattern of Mamlūk factionalism, whereby the rise of new recruits triggered the fall of their predecessors, created co-operation between old and new generations of Mamlūks in politics. Consequently, fragments of factions, yesterday's allies and rivals, and individuals from the *amīrs*' households, could unite in coalitions (*ḥizb*, pl. *aḥzāb*) through connections that crossed the old factional boundaries. This pluralistic make-up of the Circassian political coalitions for rule called for bilateralism as a unifying force. Typically of bilateral political systems, symbols were utilised to create factional cohesion, the sultan's sobriquet being one of them. The precedent of using the sobriquet of the faction's founder as a unifying symbol was set with Ṭaṭar's rise to power in 824/1421, when Barqūq's Zāhiriyya split into sub-factions, with each cohering around a contender for rule. Ṭaṭar took the sobriquet 'al-Zāhir', after his master al-Zāhir Barqūq, to enhance his legitimacy for rule. In 841/1438 al-Ashraf Barsbāy's *mamlūks* adopted his *laqab* as their factional symbol. All coalitions for power established subsequently were divided into two factions, the Zāhiriyya and the Ashrafiyya, each claiming old patron-client ties going back to two ancestors, al-Zāhir Barqūq and al-Ashraf Barsbāy, respectively. This system of bilateral factionalism might well be the reason for the relative peaceful nature of Mamlūk politics during the Circassian period. The sultans were chosen in negotiations, whereby the opposition faction was not deprived of a relative share in government and state resources. For example, in 865/1461, negotiations between the Ashrafiyya and the Zāhiriyya resulted in an agreement on the rise to power of Khushqadam, the Zāhiriyya candidate, and the reinstatement of Jānim al-Ashrafī, the Ashrafiyya candidate, to his post as *nā'ib* of Damascus.⁶⁶

Al-Ashraf Barsbāy: state monopoly on trade and industry

Barsbāy, who was one of the stalwarts of Ṭaṭar's short regime and the guardian of his minor son, ascended the sultanate in 825/1422.⁶⁷ Barsbāy's reign

marked the institutionalisation of the state monopoly on local industry and the lucrative transit trade. State monopoly on trade was made possible when the ancient transcontinental trade routes from China through Iran were diverted to the Red Sea as a result of the new political circumstances in Asia in the wake of Timur Leng's invasion. In 832/1428, a monopoly on spices was imposed in Alexandria, when Barsbāy compelled European merchants to buy spices from his agents at a fixed quantity and a fixed price. Domestically, a state monopoly was placed on textiles, sugar and other commodities. The long-term results of this policy were disastrous to Mamlūk commerce. The Kārimī merchants, who since the sixth/twelfth century had been involved in long-distance trade and enjoyed state protection, were restricted and eventually disappeared when traders became state officials acting as the sultan's commissioned agents.⁶⁸ The increase in the sultan's revenues from trade was temporary, as the demand for spices soon fell because of the monopoly's harsh fiscal policies. Consequently, the Mamlūk rulers resorted to the old practices of the sale of offices, confiscation of fortunes and compulsory purchase, which were effective in leading the treasury to immediate recovery.

To protect the lucrative Mamlūk trade, Barsbāy took action in the Mediterranean against the Catalan and Genoese pirates. He conducted three campaigns against Cyprus for its part as a Frankish haven for the pirates. In 829/1426, the island was conquered and its king was reduced to a vassal paying an annual tribute. Barsbāy adamantly opposed Shāh Rūkh's repeated attempts to provide the *kiswa*, the Ka'ba cover, for fear that the Timurid ruler of Iran might gain a formal foothold in the Ḥijāz, in close proximity with Mamlūk commercial interests.

Encroachment upon the Mamlūk sphere of influence in eastern Anatolia came from the Turcomans of the Āq Qoyunlu. In response, Edessa was ravaged in 833/1429, and in 836/1432 Barsbāy personally led another expedition to Āmid, the Āq Qoyunlu capital, but failed to conquer the city. Beyond Barsbāy's achievement of the Āq Qoyunlu recognition in Mamlūk sovereignty, these expeditions marked the beginning of the Mamlūk military decline.

From al-Zāhir Jaqmaq to al-Ashraf Qāytbāy: social conservatism and economic stagnation

Barsbāy died in the plague of 841/1438. Jaqmaq, Barsbāy's old friend from their training period and guardian of his son, al-ʿAzīz Yūsuf, ascended the sultanate. Jaqmaq's piety, most probably coupled with his mature age, determined his conservative and orthodox rule, as was to be the case with the three Mamlūk

sultans that followed him, Īnāl, Khushqadam and Qāyrbāy. As their main goal was to preserve the status quo in the state socio-political order, all these sultans were adherents of Sunnī orthodoxy (according to the Mamlūks' interpretation) and classical Mamlūk tradition. Qāyrbāy was much admired by both the civilian and the Mamlūk elites as a benevolent and just ruler, and a true adherent to tradition.⁶⁹

Adherence to Mamlūk classical tradition was demonstrated by recognition of the veteran *mamlūks*' seniority, which eventually led to the bilateral factional system discussed earlier. This system called for a wider network of patronage relationships and the necessity for securing formal and informal income to maintain them. It is in this context that the ninth/fifteenth-century phenomenon of transferring state lands, *iqṭā'*s, to private hands and turning them into *waqfs* should be perceived. From Barsbāy's reign onward, the sultans were the greatest beneficiaries of these transactions and it was with the covert incomes from *waqfs* that they covered extra expenses and fostered their patronage relations with the *amīrs* and the *julbān*. Barsbāy was the first to use a large-scale sale of state land to augment his private income. Jaqmaq secured his long rule of almost fifteen years by his prodigal awards to those around him. During his rule not only were *iqṭā'* land sales increased,⁷⁰ but *waqf* lands were also transferred to the sultan's treasury.⁷¹ On his death in 857/1453, he left behind empty coffers. Īnāl was about seventy-two years old when the sultanate was imposed on him by the Ashrafiyya *amīrs* who manipulated him. During his reign, the sales of *iqṭā'* lands were tripled, while most of them went to the *amīrs*. During the four-month reign of Aḥmad, Īnāl's son, negotiations between the Ashrafiyya and Zāhiriyya resulted in an agreement regarding the elevation of the Zāhirī candidate, Khushqadam. Upon his ascension, veteran Ashrafiyya *amīrs* were granted posts and larger *iqṭā'*s, while the whole army was bribed to support his rule by *iqṭā'*s and grants. The wholesale disposal of the *iqṭā'*s taken from Īnāl's *julbān* was hastily implemented in order to satisfy the *mamlūks*. When these were not enough, the *waqfs* of Īnāl and his supporters were given out. Qāyrbāy's *waqfs*, which were very likely originally *iqṭā'* lands too, were manipulated to increase unlisted income in his personal treasury, from which he met his *mamlūks*' wage demands.⁷²

The growing frustration among the *julbān* over the sparse representation in the *amīrs*' ranks and the lengthy period they had to wait until they could change their position in the power structure led them frequently to vent their frustrations in unruly actions. Jaqmaq was too feeble to suppress his *julbān*'s disorder. During Īnāl's reign, the *julbān*'s disrespect towards the sultan, the

amīrs and the officials escalated. In 859/1455 they looted the *amīrs*' granaries, dismounted the jurists and other officials, took their horses and mules and seized commodities from shops in the market. Ibn Iyās mentions that their crimes did not stop until 865/1460 when many of them died in the plague, to his and the population's relief.⁷³ From the outbreak of the war against the Ottomans in 886/1481, riots and outrages by *julbān*, joined by veteran *mamlūks*, became common scenes in Cairo. In 891/1486, when Qāytbāy could not meet the *mamlūks*' demands for increased wages, confiscations of property of office-holders, craftsmen and merchants were implemented as emergency measures with '*ulamā*' support. In 894/1489 and again in 896/1490, Qāytbāy threatened to abdicate and retire to Mecca in order to obtain the agreement of the chief *qāḍī*s, the '*ulamā*' and the *amīrs* to extort extra money from the producing sectors in order to meet the *mamlūks*' demands.

The weak government invited Bedouin unrest. During Khushqadam's reign, five expeditions were sent to the province of al-Buḥayra to suppress the Labīd tribe. In 890/1485, when the Mamlūks had their hands full fighting against the Ottomans, the Hawwāra, the Berber tribe that Barqūq had moved from the Delta, sacked the Fayyūm and acted as the true rulers of Upper Egypt. The Bedouins in Syria became unmanageable, wreaked havoc and rendered communication between Egypt and Syria impossible. The government was too weak to impose real Mamlūk authority and the Mamlūk punitive expeditions were designed to play the Bedouins against each other in order to preserve Mamlūk order.

After Barsbāy's reign, it became increasingly difficult to protect Mamlūk trade from Frankish piracy based in Rhodes, while the Mamlūk protectorate on Cyprus was tenuous. In 844/1440 and 847/1443, Jaqmaq sent expeditions to attack Rhodes via Cyprus which failed and compelled the Mamlūks to conclude a peace treaty with the Knights of St John. Mamlūk hegemony in Cyprus was threatened after the death of John II (862/1456), when his son James, who was the Mamlūks' protégé, was defeated by his sister Charlotte who ascended the throne. The Mamlūks easily took Nicosia but retreated when the siege on Cerines was prolonged, leaving James with a contingent that was too small to tip the balance in his favour. In 863/1459 the Franks had attacked the sultanate's coastal cities and caused destruction. In reaction, a Mamlūk contingent was sent in 865/1461 to install James on the Cypriot throne under Mamlūk suzerainty. The small Mamlūk contingent that was stationed in Cyprus, however, encouraged James to clash openly with the sultan's representative in Famagusta in 868/1464. The government's hesitation to send reinforcements from Cairo led to the Mamlūks' defeat and the transfer of the city into

James's possession. The Mamlūks' efforts were diverted from Cyprus when, in the same year, conflicts with the Ottomans over the hegemony in Anatolia broke out.

Disregard of the new state order that emerged in South-West Asia in the wake of Timur's invasion and the rise of the Ottomans made the Circassian sultans cling to the buffer-zone strategy in eastern Anatolia that had been established about a century earlier. As long as the Ottomans were occupied with their conquests in Europe, the Mamlūks could preserve the pre-Timurid state order at a reasonable price. It became more difficult after 868/1464, when Mehmed the Conqueror resumed Ottoman expansionist ambitions towards Anatolia. In the same year, Arslān, the Dhū al-Qādirid ruler, who sought Ottoman protection, used the death of Ibrāhīm Beg of Qaramān and the ensuing internal disputes to restore Kayseri, which had been lost to the Qaramānids in 839/1435. The Qaramānid ruler, Ishāq, responded by encouraging the Āq Qoyunlu Turcoman chief, Uzūn Ḥasan, to expel the Dhū al-Qādirids. After the occupation of the Qaramānid principality, Uzūn Ḥasan held effective control over the Qaramānid Beg he installed on the throne, while Mamlūk suzerainty remained formally untouched. This arrangement paved the way for a Mamlūk-Āq Qoyunlu alliance against the Ottomans. However, Ḥasan's conquest of Elbistan, the Dhū al-Qādirid capital, in 869/1465, aroused Khushqadam's mistrust and prevented co-operation. Consequently, Khushqadam turned to the Ottomans and offered them an alliance, a request that was not welcomed. Instead, the Ottomans chose to regain Kayseri and drive Ḥasan's vassal out. In 874/1470, Qaramān was formally annexed by the Ottomans. The struggle over the Dhū al-Qādir principality followed when, in 870/1466, Arslān was murdered, probably at Khushqadam's instigation. The two contenders for rule who were supported by Khushqadam failed to consolidate their positions in power, while Shāh Suwār, a third candidate who allied with the Ottomans, was assisted in his rise to power by their troops. Khushqadam's attempts to restore control over the Dhū al-Qādirid *beglik* were rejected by Mehmed II.⁷⁴ When Khushqadam died in 872/1467, news arrived that the Mamlūk army in Syria had been defeated by Shāh Suwār while defending Aleppo. This defeat primarily stemmed from the *amīrs*' refusal to leave Cairo, for struggles over the sultanate were anticipated when Khushqadam became gravely ill. After Qāyrbāy's ascent to the sultanate, subsequent campaigns were conducted between 872/1468 and 876/1472 until Shāh Suwār was captured and brought to Cairo, where he was executed. However, this Mamlūk achievement was temporary, since the defeat of Uzūn Ḥasan, the Āq Qoyunlu chief, in 878/1473 in Bashkent (today's Bashkoy) by

the Ottomans and his subsequent death paved the way for the installation of a new pro-Ottoman ruler in Dhū al-Qādirid Elbistan. The large number of casualties, excessive expenditures and prolonged military efforts that the superior Mamlūk army had to invest in subduing the local Turcoman army of Shāh Suwār inflicted a blow on the prestige of the Mamlūk sultanate as a great power.⁷⁵

The Mamlūk–Ottoman conflict over Anatolia was accelerated when in 886/1481 Qāyṭbāy gave asylum to Jem (Cem), Bāyezīd II's (r. 886–918/1481–1512) brother and rival for the throne. While previously the Ottomans only provided support to their Dhū al-Qādirid clients, from 889/1484 they joined them in their fight against the Mamlūks. Qāyṭbāy skilfully led sixteen campaigns between the first Ottoman invasion of Cilicia, the gateway to Syria, in 890/1485, and their defeat in 894/1489 at the battle of Agha Çayiri. He forced the mighty Ottomans to come to terms with the Mamlūks in the peace treaty of 896/1491 and respect pre-war Mamlūk hegemony in eastern Anatolia. The Ottomans ceded the territories they had taken beyond the Taurus range, while the Mamlūks were obligated to turn them into *waqfs*, dedicated to the two Holy Cities. The treaty saved the Mamlūks' prestige and granted them renewed, free access to the Black Sea slave markets and the metal mines of silver, copper and iron, and the salt mines, including saltpetre, a major ingredient of gunpowder. Nevertheless, this treaty exposed again the Mamlūk anachronistic status quo strategy built around mutual recognition of spheres of influence, and the preference for negotiations for resolving conflicts within the Muslim world, which prevented the Mamlūk sultans from recognising the technological and economic stagnation in the sultanate and the necessity for introducing reforms into their armies.

Al-Ashraf Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī: a late attempt at reforms

The growing frustration among the Mamlūk factions over the extensive period of Qāyṭbāy's rule, accompanied by the ensuing lack of opportunities to change their position in the political power structure, erupted into intensive factional struggles that brought four sultans to the throne in the interregnum between his death (901/1496) and the appointment of his eventual, more than sixty-year-old successor, al-Ashraf Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (906/1501).⁷⁶ Uncompromising methods of exiling and eliminating potential rivals were used to secure al-Ghawrī's supreme power. Three individuals were his confidants and the mainstays of his regime. The first was Ṭumanbāy, his nephew, who served as *dawādār*. The second was Sārī 'l-Dīn ibn al-Shiḥna, a Syrian juristconsult, who held the Ḥanafī *qāḍiship* for more than a decade, during

which he provided his patron with the legal techniques for manipulating the *waqfs* to create a concealed reserve from the unlisted income for his exclusive use. The third of al-Ghawrī's confidants was al-Zaynī Barakāt ibn Mūsā, who rose from obscure origins to serve as bailiff. Under him, confiscation was extended from the wealthy civilian sector, to the Mamlūk elite who had previously been untouchable and the general populace who had so far escaped persecution due to their poverty.⁷⁷

The ongoing deterioration for over fifteen decades in the producing sectors of the sultanate peaked into economic stagnation. As was mentioned earlier, Egypt's agricultural potential was no longer fully exploited. Craftsmen and merchants concealed their resources instead of improving their production and output. Egypt's industry remained traditional, with only minor changes in production techniques, oriented towards limited-scale production of sophisticated luxury goods, whereas in Europe new technologies and mechanisation resulted in wide production of plain and low-priced goods for domestic and foreign markets.⁷⁸ Products for which Europe once had been dependent on Middle Eastern expertise, such as silk, cotton and sugar, were now widely produced in Europe and then sold in Middle Eastern markets at lower prices. The decline of production in Egypt was also the result of the gradual transfer of industry from private to government hands which suppressed the motivation of the producing sectors to improve quality and production methods.⁷⁹

The maritime revolution in Europe had transformed the global trade order. In 905/1498, Vasco da Gama appeared in the Indian Ocean, in 907/1500 an Egyptian fleet was attacked off Diu, the north-western Indian harbour, and in 909/1503 a Portuguese squadron sailed close to the Red Sea gateway, while European piracy continued to threaten Mamlūk commerce in the Mediterranean. Al-Ghawrī adopted an aggressive stance in his dealings with European aggression against Mamlūk trade, and allied with the Ottomans, who since 909/1502 had been worried by the growing power of the Safavids and their relations with the Europeans. From 912/1507, an armed force was present in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The alliance with the Ottomans enabled the Mamlūks to obtain timber and iron for the construction of ships, and, from 917/1511, guns, powder, sailors and craftsmen skilled in shipbuilding.⁸⁰

In 914/1508, al-Ghawrī began establishing an artillery corps, and in 917/1511 a corps of harquebusiers, known as the 'Fifth Corps' in the sources, was recruited from outside the Mamlūks' cadres. This corps was manned by black slaves, sons of Mamlūks, local artisans and foreigners, and paid largely from unofficial resources that had mainly come from *waqf* manipulation.

Although al-Ghawrī's innovations were minor in scope, he immediately met stiff opposition from the Mamlūk elite who vigorously defended Mamlūk military tradition, which was their ethos and status symbol. In 920/1514, riots fomented by recruits and veteran *mamlūks* accused al-Ghawrī of fostering the new corps at their expense. Confronted with the Mamlūk opposition, the economic constraints caused by the collapse of agriculture, and the diversion of the transcontinental commerce from Egypt, al-Ghawrī only gradually instituted his reform, insufficiently to cope with the challenges created by the new regional and world order.

Upon Bāyezīd's death in 918/1512, his son, Selīm I, seized power in Constantinople and soon led his army into Anatolia to curb the expansionist ambitions of the Safavid Shāh Ismā'īl. The two linked their aspirations for expansion with the ideology of universal Muslim hegemony. Al-Ghawrī still perceived these new developments in Anatolia in terms of the old *status quo* in the Muslim world. He estimated that the Safavids could be contained within the former Āq Qoyunlu borders, without Mamlūk intervention. Selīm defeated Ismā'īl at Chaldiran near Tabriz in 920/1514, and displayed displeasure to the Mamlūks and their vassals, the Dhū al-Qādirids, for their neutrality. In 921/1515 the Dhū al-Qādirids were invaded and defeated by Selīm. On 25 Rajab 922/24 August 1516, the two armies, Ottoman and Mamlūk, engaged in battle at Marj Dābiq, north of Aleppo. The Ottoman army included infantry and cavalry equipped with artillery and harquebuses. Al-Ghawrī's army, on the other hand, was composed of sultanīc *mamlūks* (*julbān* and veterans), *amīrs'* *sayfiyya* troops, and reservists – no harquebusiers from the 'Fifth Corps' took part in the battle. The veterans were deployed on the front line and bore the brunt of the battle, while the recruits demonstrated incompetence. The veterans interpreted their deployment as a deliberate scheme to spare the recruits and began to desert the battlefield. When it was reported that Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī had died of a heart attack, the rest of his army fled the battlefield. The Mamlūks' defeat in this battle clearly exposed the problematic structure of the Mamlūk army and its obsolete military skills and armaments. Selīm easily conquered Syria and entered Damascus without resistance. Ṭumanbāy, al-Ghawrī's nephew and viceregent, who was proclaimed sultan in Cairo, made preparations to meet the Ottoman invasion of Egypt. On 29 Dhū al-Ḥijja 922/23 January 1517, a second defeat was inflicted on the Mamlūk army at Raydāniyya, north of Cairo. Ṭumanbāy was captured and hanged, while Khāyrbak, the former Mamlūk viceroy of Aleppo, was appointed as first Ottoman governor of Egypt. Egypt and Syria became separate provinces of the Ottoman empire.

Conclusion

A variety of theories have been offered to explain the success of the Mamlūk institution in the medieval Muslim world. The prevalence and longevity of the Mamlūk system led some scholars to characterise it as an outgrowth of Islamic civilisation. Bringing in slaves with a pagan background from outside the borders of Islam has been explained by the proscription of taking Muslims into bondage. Its dominance in Islamic armies has been explained by the shortage of military manpower because Muslims preferred urban, commercial life. The preference of Muslim rulers for purchasing *mamlūks* of nomadic origins, mainly from Central Asia and the Eurasian steppes, for their reputation as skilled horsemen and archers, has been explained by technological developments such as spurs which brought about a change in the army's make-up – from an infantry-based army to one consisting of skilled cavalrymen. The Mamlūks' involvement in politics has been explained by the avoidance of the educated Muslim elite of political activity because it did not fall into line with Muslim ideals.⁸¹

The constant recruitment of new *mamlūks* into the Mamlūk elite and the non-transfer of their rights to their descendants led to problems like schism in their political system, lack of large popular legitimacy and decentralisation of government that threatened the stability of the Mamlūk rule. Since the Mamlūk sultanate's foundation, the Mamlūks adopted mechanisms that regulated their tendency towards schism and set the rules for reshuffles in government without damaging the state's socio-political structure by unbridled violent struggles. The sultan's legitimacy for rule within the Mamlūk elite depended upon the support of his veteran peers (*khushdāshiyya*) and others who cohered as an interest group. His ascent to power was arranged in an agreement whereby the dominant *amīrs* undertook to support his rule, while he was committed to protect their position and economic interests, considered as their inherent rights or moral economy, against rival factions. Infringing this exchange relationship on the sultan's part justified his deposition, regularly with bloodshed, and the appointment of a new sultan. To secure his position and reinforce his authority over the Mamlūk oligarchy, the Mamlūk sultan not only cultivated formal and informal patronage relationships with the veteran *amīrs*, but also fostered a new Mamlūk household of his own that would, in the course of his rule, provide loyal *mamlūks* to be placed gradually in key positions instead of the veterans.

The cyclical process of the rise of new Mamlūk factions triggering the fall of their predecessors, which was characteristic of the Mamlūk political system

during the Turkish period, prevented the development of a consistent attitude towards the idea of dynastic rule. The question of whether the Mamlūks intended to establish a dynastic rule is still open. However, there is agreement among scholars of Mamlūk history that when the Mamlūks did install sultans' sons in the sultanate, they had no intention of relinquishing power to them. Since the Mamlūk state foundation, Mamlūk sultans had routinely handed down the sultanate to their descendants by will, but after an inter-factional struggle over rule the young prince was replaced by an *amīr* chosen from among the magnates. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign was exceptional because, although he was enthroned by his father's *amīrs*, he succeeded in establishing an effective rule for himself based on the Mamlūk guard he had recruited during his earlier reigns. The Qalāwūnid rule lasted over forty years after al-Nāṣir's death, primarily because the Mamlūk pattern of conflict management was destabilised and lost its moderating mechanisms. The incessant competition over rule among prominent *amīrs*, mainly those who were promoted rapidly to emirates during this period, and their encouragement of the low-ranking *mamlūks* by bribes and privileges to transfer their allegiance from one faction to another, eroded the *amīrs*' authority and spawned schism. The rise of the Circassians in 784/1382 signalled the departure from the early pattern of Mamlūk factionalism. The veteran *mamlūks*' seniority in the Mamlūk political system was recognised and consequently the sultan's dependence on the Mamlūk oligarchy increased significantly. The Circassian sultans filled the *amīrs*' ranks with veteran *mamlūks*, while their own recruits (*julbān*) were hardly promoted during their reign. The *julbān*'s lack of military power and experience prevented them from holding onto power on their master's death. After their dispersion from the Citadel, they were absorbed into the *amīrs*' households where a co-operation was created between old and new generations of *mamlūks*, from both the sultans' and the *amīrs*' households, in the formation of coalitions for rule. The pluralistic make-up of the Circassian coalitions for rule called for bilateralism as a new factional order and for new symbols of cohesion, one of which was the sultan's sobriquet (*laqab*). From the 820s/1420s the *mamlūks* were divided into two main factions, the Ṣāḥiriyya and Ashrafiyya, each claiming old patron-client ties going back to two ancestors, al-Ṣāḥir Barqūq and al-Ashraf Barsbāy. Bilateralism reduced schism and enabled the Mamlūk oligarchy to enact peaceful settlements for government reshuffles. Negotiations between Ashrafiyya and Ṣāḥiriyya *amīrs* resulted in agreements on the rise of mature older Mamlūk *amīrs* to the sultanate, and on the proportional division of rank and state resources between both factions.

Despite their long years of reign, the Mamlūk elite had remained a small group of new immigrants from a slave and non-Muslim background within a community with a deep-rooted Arab-Muslim culture. To overcome their socio-cultural inferiority, the Mamlūks used their ethnic culture as a symbol of their unique status which separated them as a ruling elite from the civilian population. Yet, the Mamlūks succeeded in creating an organic state. They secured their rule by maintaining a fabric of hierarchical patronage relationships that bound all important groups of society to the Mamlūk elite. They controlled the country's economy by the *iqṭā'* system and their involvement in commerce and industry. Through the *iqṭā'* system they cultivated an informal network of patronage with the urban and rural state administration, mainly staffed with Copts and Coptic converts. They also supported the influential merchants who had been involved in long-distance trade by providing them with state protection both within and without the sultanate. However, the stationing of the Mamlūk elite in urban centres and the absence of significant external threats to the sultanate since the 720s/1320s led to their increasing involvement in commercial life, which encroached on the merchants' position. In the ninth/fifteenth century the Mamlūks shunted the merchants aside by establishing a state monopoly on trade, and gradually they were compelled to act as the sultan's commissioned agents. The industry in Egypt was similarly transferred from private to government hands. The monopoly increased the dependence of the large population on the Mamlūk government, but at the same time the Mamlūks paid the price of the growing stagnation in the sultanate economy.

The Mamlūks created popular legitimacy for their rule by perpetuating their image as protectors and patrons of Islamic institutions. They gained great prestige in the Muslim world as guardians of the holy places in Mecca and Medina and by hosting the 'Abbāsid caliphate. At the early period of the sultanate, Mamlūk patronage of Islam included the establishment of religious foundations, both orthodox and Sufi, with charity endowments for their maintenance. The *madrasas* they established supplied cadres of '*ulamā*' responsible for the educational and judicial systems that accorded formal legitimacy to their rule, while the Sufi orders which practised popular Islam supplied popular support to their regime. Later, the Mamlūks led to the popularisation of orthodox institutions by inviting Sufis to instruct in *madrasas* and nominating '*ulamā*' to teach in *khānqāhs*, and by introducing an orthodox curriculum into *khānqāhs*. Consequently, both orthodox and Sufi institutions underwent moderation and differences between them became

indistinct. Concomitant with the moderation of the religious institutions was the weakening in the power of critical learned scholars of the Mamlūk government.

It was against the background of the erosion of the Shāfi'ī 'ulamā' and *fuqahā'* dominance over the Egyptian judicial institutions that tension and rivalry over legitimacy and hegemony arose between the Shāfi'ī learned scholars and the Mamlūk elite. While the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* enjoyed absolute dominance in the Ayyūbid judicial system under the Mamlūks, with Baybars' reform of 665/1265 it became one of the four schools of law. This reform increased the prestige of the Ḥanafī 'ulamā' who generally legitimised their Mamlūk patrons' policies. When Baybars also tried to include in this reform the division of the *waqf* in Egypt and Syria among the four *madhhabs*, he met strong opposition from Shāfi'ī legists. Mamlūk sultans would repeatedly try to get hold of the great fortunes of the *waqfs*. From Barsbāy's reign onward, legal techniques were used to transfer state lands, *iqṭā'*, into private hands and turn them into *waqfs*. It was through the *waqf* manipulation that the Mamlūk sultans funnelled public funds to their families and gained covert incomes to maintain their patronage relations in the army and the large population. Further erosion in the legists' situation came when the popularisation of the religious institutions and the judicial system brought persons from lower classes to prominent positions, such as the vizierate, *ḥisba*,⁸² and *qāḍī*ships, through patronage relations and the practice of payment for nomination. The position of the *shar'ī qāḍī* was impinged upon when during the Circassian period the jurisdiction of the Mamlūk *ḥujjāb* was extended to deal with *shar'ī* matters and senior *amīrs* and even *julbān* held 'private' courts for disputes among the civilians.

Although the Mamlūk army was one of the most highly trained among contemporary armies, its relatively small size imposed a de facto restriction on the Mamlūks' ability to maintain an effective central government, particularly towards the Arab and Turcoman nomad populations. Throughout their autonomous rule, the Mamlūks did not succeed in effectively subjugating the Bedouins to the central government for any length of time. The Mamlūks tried to secure order among the Bedouins through exploiting inter-tribal conflicts over hegemony, and political patronage of powerful chiefs who were appointed to *imrat al-'arab* in exchange for duties such as guarding frontiers, securing the royal postal system and supplying relay horses to the Mamlūk army. In the Delta region the Mamlūks managed to settle the Bedouins in villages, thus bringing about indirect control over them through

powerful families. The settlement of the Bedouins coupled with Bedouin anarchism in different regions of Egypt and Syria constituted a decisive factor in agricultural decline in the Mamlūk state, and the conversion of tilled areas into pastureland.

The small size of the Mamlūk army was a decisive factor also in Mamlūk expansionist policy, particularly when part of it always remained in Cairo and the provincial cities to prevent anti-government uprisings. Beyond their conquests of the Crusading principalities in Syria and Palestine and limited areas in the Upper Euphrates, the Mamlūks maintained a perceptive strategy of spheres of influence under their protectorate rather than direct rule over territories far from their home bases. During the reigns of Baybars, Qalāwūn and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in which Mamlūk rule flourished, included in Mamlūk government spheres of influence were Nubia and Cyrenaica. In 725/1325 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's attempt to expand the Mamlūk spheres of influence to Yemen, which was of particular importance in the transit trade between the Far East and Europe, failed, mainly for reasons of distance and geographical constraints. On two occasions, in 676/1277 and 822/1419, the Mamlūks avoided the posting of a garrison in the territories they had occupied in Anatolia, and chose to withdraw to Syria. Following the collapse of the Mongol Ilkhanate of Persia in the 740s/1340s, the Mamlūks exploited the vacuum formed in the state order in South-West Asia to establish buffer zones of Turcoman states (*begliks*) – the Dhū 'l-Qādirid, Ramaḍānid and Qaramānid principalities – in eastern Anatolia under their aegis. This sphere of influence was to prevent nomad incursions, and to ensure import of strategic materials and a free overland passage of *mamlūks* from the slave markets in the Black Sea area. Conservatism led the Mamlūks to stick to their buffer-zone policy and disregard the new political make-up that had emerged in eastern Anatolia in the wake of the Timurid invasion and the rise of the Ottomans in western Anatolia. As long as the Timurids acted as a great power in Anatolia, the Ottomans limited their expansionist aspirations to bringing the Turcoman principalities under their protection. With the defeat of Āq Qoyunlu, the Timurid clients, in Bashkent in 878/1473, the Mamlūk–Ottoman conflict over Anatolia became overt. Although Qāyrbāy's campaigns against the Ottomans forced them to restore pre-war Mamlūk sovereignty in Anatolia, they exposed the Mamlūks' anachronistic strategies and the technological and the sultanate economic stagnation. The Mamlūk praetorian regime barred new technologies that had changed the means and patterns of production in Europe and the global trade order.

Thus, the Mamlūks rejected the use of firearms lest their ethos of chivalry which was also their status symbol might be harmed.⁸³ When firearms were introduced in the sultanate towards the end of Mamlūk rule, it was too late and too small in scale to tip the balance against the Ottomans, who gained through their deployment the position of a great power in the new state order.⁸⁴

12 *The Turkish Mamlūk sultans*

Shajar al-Durr (648/1250)
al-Mu'izz Aybak (648–55/1250–7)
al-Manṣūr 'Alī (655–7/1257–9)
al-Muẓaffar Quṭuz (657–8/1259–60)
al-Zāhir Baybars (658–76/1260–77)
al-Sa'īd Baraka Khān (676–8/1277–9)
al-'Ādil Salāmish (678/1279)
al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (678–89/1279–90)
al-Ashraf Khalīl (689–93/1290–3)
al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (693–4/1293–4)
al-'Ādil Kitbughā (694–6/1294–6)
al-Manṣūr Lājīn (696–8/1296–9)
al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (698–708/1299–1309)
al-Muẓaffar Baybars (708–9/1309–10)
al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (709–41/1310–41)
al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr (741f./1341)
al-Ashraf Kujuk (742–3/1341–2)
al-Nāṣir Aḥmad (742f./1342)
Al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl (743–6/1342–5)
al-Kāmil Sha'bān (746–7/1345–6)
al-Muẓaffar Ḥājī (747–8/1346–7)
al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (748–52/1347–51)
al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ (752–5/1351–4)
al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (755–62/1354–61)
al-Manṣūr Muḥammad (762–4/1361–3)
al-Ashraf Sha'bān (764–78/1363–77)
al-Manṣūr 'Alī (778–83/1377–81)
al-Ṣāliḥ/al-Manṣūr Ḥājī (783–4/1381–2)
(791–2/1389–90)

13 The Circassian sultans

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- al-Ẓāhir Barqūq (784–91/1382–9)
 (792–801/1390–9)
- al-Nāṣir Faraj (ibn Barqūq) (801–8/1399–1405)
- al-Manṣūr ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (ibn Barqūq) (808/1405)
- al-Nāṣir Faraj (808–15/1405–12)
- al-Musta‘īn (caliph and sultan) (815/1412)
- al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh (815–24/1412–21)
- al-Muẓaffar Aḥmad (ibn Shaykh) (824/1421)
- al-Ẓāhir Ṭaṭar (824/1421)
- al-Ṣāliḥ Muḥammad (ibn Ṭaṭar) (824–5/1421–2)
- al-Ashraf Barsbāy (825–42/1422–38)
- al-‘Azīz Yūsuf (ibn Barsbāy) (842/1438)
- al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq (842–57/1438–53)
- al-Manṣūr ‘Uthmān (ibn Jaqmaq) (857/1453)
- al-Ashraf Īnāl (857–65/1453–60)
- al-Mu‘ayyad Aḥmad (ibn Īnāl) (865/1460f.)
- al-Ẓāhir Khushqadam (865–72/1461–7)
- al-Ẓāhir Yalbāy (872/1467f.)
- al-Ẓāhir Tīmūrbughā (872f./1468)
- al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy (873–901/1468–95)
- al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (ibn Qāyṭbāy) (901–4/1495–8)
- al-Ẓāhir Qānṣūh (904–5/1498–9)
- al-Ashraf Jānbalāt/Jānbulāt (905–6/1499–1501)
- al-‘Ādil Ṭūmanbāy (906/1501)
- al-Ashraf Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (906–22/1501–16)
- al-Ashraf Ṭūmānbāy (922/1516f.)
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Chronology

336/948	Kalbid rule begins in Sicily.
359/970	The Fāṭimids establish their capital in Cairo. The Zīrids rule in their name in Ifrīqiya.
361/972	The Fāṭimids leave for Egypt.
400/1009	Destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem during the reign of the Fāṭimid caliph al Ḥākim.
401/1010	The ruling Sharīf in Mecca proclaims himself caliph. In Yemen al Ḥusayn ibn al Qāsim al ‘Iyānī claims to be the rightful imam and the <i>maḥdī</i> .
405/1014 15	The Zīrid Ḥammād recognises the ‘Abbāsid caliphate.
406 7/1015 17	Massacre of Shī‘īs in Tunis and Qayrawān.
411/1021	Death of the Fāṭimid caliph al Ḥākim.
414 15/1024 5	Famine in Egypt.
416/1025	Beginnings of the Mirdāsīd dynasty (northern Syria and the middle Euphrates area). Byzantine landing at Messina.
422/1031	Abolishment of the Umayyad caliphate in Cordoba.
425/1034	Peace between the Kalbids of Sicily and the Byzantines.
426 40/1035 48	Beginnings of the Almoravid movement.
431/1040	The Saljuq Turks defeat the Ghaznavids at Dandānqān.
440/1048 9	The Zīrids recognise the ‘Abbāsid caliphate and renounce allegiance to the Fāṭimids.
443/1051	The <i>amīr</i> of the Banū Qurra in Barqa (Cyrenaica) denounces the Fāṭimids and offers his allegiance to the Zīrid al Mu‘izz.
443/1052	The Arab Banū Hilāl after entering Ifrīqiya from Fāṭimid Egypt defeat the Zīrids at Ḥaydarān.

446/1054	5	The Zīrid al Mu‘izz returns to Fāṭimid allegiance.
450/1058		Death of al Māwardī, author of an influential work on Islamic political thought (<i>al Aḥkām al sulṭāniyya</i>).
451/1059		Death of Ibn Yāsīn, founder of the Almoravid movement.
453/1061		The Normans commanded by Roger cross into Sicily.
454/1062		Death of the Zīrid al Mu‘izz.
455/1063		Al Ṣulayḥī rules over wide parts of Yemen in the name of the Fāṭimid caliph. A pro Fāṭimid reign is installed in Mecca.
456/1064		Death of the Zāhiri jurist and theologian Ibn Ḥazm in al Andalus.
457/1064		The Saljuq Alp Arslān invades Georgia and takes the Armenian towns of Ani and Kars.
459/1066		Massacre of Jews in Zīrid Granada.
463/1070		Founding of Marrakesh by the Almoravids.
463/1071		The Saljuqs defeat the Byzantines at Manzikert.
464/1072		Norman conquest of Palermo.
466/1073		The Armenian Badr al Jamālī intervenes in Fāṭimid Egypt, beginning of military rule.
467/1075		Sulaymān ibn Qutulmish seizes Nicaea and founds the Saljuq sultanate of Anatolia.
469	70/1077	Norman conquest of Val di Mazara in Sicily.
478/1085		Christian conquest of Toledo.
479/1086		The Almoravids defeat the Christians at the battle of Zallāqa.
484/1091		Completion of Norman conquest of Sicily (started in 453/1061).
485/1092		Assassination of the Saljuq vizier Niẓām al Mulk.
487/1094		The Fāṭimid caliph al Mustanṣir dies. Disagreement over his succession brings about the emergence of the Nizārīs, a branch of the Ismā‘īlīs. El Cid conquers Valencia.
489/1096		Qılıj Arslān annihilates the People’s Crusade of Peter the Hermit after it crossed the Bosphorus from Constantinople. The Hilalian Banū Jāmi‘ establish their rule in Gabes.
490/1098		The Crusaders conquer Antioch.
492/1099		The Crusaders conquer Jerusalem.

494/1100	Baldwin of Edessa has himself crowned king of Jerusalem.
497/1104	Acre conquered by the Crusaders.
502/1109	Tripoli conquered by the Crusaders.
503/1109	In Cordoba, burning of the works by al Ghazālī, author of <i>Iḥyā' 'ulūm al dīn</i> ('The revival of religious sciences').
505/1111	Death of al Ghazālī.
511/1119	Ibn Tūmart, the founder of the Almohad movement, arrives at Bougie.
512/1119	Christian armies reach the banks of the Ebro river in the Iberian Peninsula.
515/1121	The Fāṭimid caliph al Āmir puts an end to al Afḍal's military rule. Ibn Tūmart is proclaimed <i>mahdī</i> .
517/1123	The Fāṭimids invade Palestine and are defeated by the Crusaders at the battle of Yabne (Ibelin).
518/1124	Tyre conquered by the Franks. Ibn Tūmart and his followers move to Tinmal.
524/1130	Assassination of the Fāṭimid caliph al Āmir. Attack of the Almohads against Marrakesh (battle of Buḥayra). Death of Ibn Tūmart.
527/1133	'Abd al Mu'min is proclaimed Ibn Tūmart's successor.
529/1135	The Normans of Sicily, under Roger II, occupy the isle of Djerba. Norman presence in the Ifrīqīyan coast lasts until 555/1160, being brought to an end by the Almohads.
535/1140f.	The Almohads complete the conquest of the Sūs. Andalusī revolts against the Almoravids.
539/1144	Zangi takes Edessa from the Franks. The Sufi Ibn Qasī rules in the Algarve (southern Portugal).
539/1145	Death of Reverter, the commander of the Almoravid Christian mercenaries.
540/1146	Fez conquered by the Almohads. Friday sermon delivered in the name of the Almohads in Cadiz. Ibn Hūd defeated and killed by the Christians in al Andalus.
541/1146	Death of Zangi.
541/1147	Almohad conquest of Marrakesh, capital of the Almoravid empire. Lisbon conquered by Crusaders travelling to Jerusalem (542/1147). Almohad troops

	cross the Straits and take possession of the Algarve and Seville.
542/1147	Almería conquered by the Christians with Genoese help.
542 5/1147 50	The rebellion of al Massī crushed by the Almohads.
543/1148	Second Crusade. Norman conquest of al Mahdiyya. The Ebro valley is completely lost to the Christians.
544/1149	Nūr al Dīn wins the battle of Inab where Raymond of Antioch is killed. Death of Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, author of a popular book on the Prophet Muḥammad. Great 'purge' (<i>i'tirāf</i>) of the Almohads.
546/1151	The rulers of the western regions of al Andalus cross the Straits to pledge obedience to the Almohad caliph 'Abd al Mu'min.
547/1152	Algiers, Bougie, the Qal'a of the Banū Ḥammād and Constantine conquered by the Almohads.
548/1153	'Abd al Mu'min crushes the tribes of the Banū Hilāl at Setif. Ascalon conquered by Baldwin III.
549/1154	Nūr al Dīn conquers Damascus and makes it his capital.
552/1157	The pledge of obedience of the original Almohad tribes is renewed and the caliph visits Tinmal. Almería conquered by the Almohads.
554 5/1159 60	Almohad conquest of Ifrīqiya, including al Mahdiyya, Sfax and Tripoli.
556/1161	Defeat of the Arab tribes by the Almohads in al Qarn near Qayrawān.
560 2/1165 6	The Almohads fight and defeat Mazīzdag al Ghumārī and his son.
560 5/1164 9	Frankish invasions of Egypt.
560/1165	The Jewish thinker Maimonides, escaping Almohad persecution, arrives in Egypt.
561/1166	Death of the Sufi 'Abd al Qādir al Jilānī.
563/1168	The Almohad Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf takes the caliphal title.
564/1169	Ibn Mardanīsh, ruler of the Levant in al Andalus, is abandoned by Ibn Hamushk.
567/1171	Saladin puts an end to the Fāṭimid caliphate.
	Acknowledgement of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate in Egypt.

- The Almohad caliph crosses to al Andalus with an army including Arabs from Ifrīqiya and raids are made in the area of Toledo.
- 567/1172 Death of Ibn Mardānīsh.
- 569/1174 Ayyūbid invasion of Yemen. The Normans of Sicily attack Alexandria. Death of Nūr al Dīn and Amalric. Giraldo Sem Pavor defects to the Almohads, serving them in the Maghrib where he dies.
- 571/1176 Death of Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar Īntī, the last of Ibn Tūmart’s companions and eponym of the Ḥafṣids.
- 572/1176 Qilij Arslān defeats Manuel Comnenus at Myriocephalon ending Byzantine hope of retaking Anatolia.
- 573/1178 The king of Portugal raids the areas of Beja and Seville.
- 575 6/1180 I The Almohad caliph leads a successful expedition against Gafsa.
- 578/1182 Alfonso VIII of Castile camps in front of Cordoba and his raids reach Algeciras near the sea. Death of the Sufi Aḥmad al Rifā‘ī.
- 580/1184 The Almoravid ‘Alī ibn Ghāniya occupies Bougie, Algiers and Milyāna.
- 582/1186 The Almoravid ‘Alī ibn Ghāniya occupies the oasis of Tawzar and Gafsa and joins forces with the governor of Tripoli, the Armenian Qarāqūsh. The Almohad caliph Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb launches an expedition against Ifrīqiya.
- 583/1187 Saladin’s victory over the Crusaders at Ḥiṭṭīn is followed by the Muslim conquest of Acre and Jerusalem. Dinar issued by Saladin in Damascus to celebrate the victory over the Franks.
- 585/1189 Third Crusade.
- 586/1190 An ambassador sent by Saladin asks the Almohad caliph to help halt the Crusaders in the east with his fleet.
- 587/1191 Acre conquered by the Crusaders. The Sufi al Suhrawardī executed in Aleppo on Saladin’s orders.
- 589/1193 Death of Saladin.
- 591/1195 The Almohad army defeats Alfonso VIII at Alarcos.
- 595/1198 Death of the philosopher Averroes.

595 7/1198 1200	Famine in Egypt.
599/1203	The Almohads take the Balearic Islands from the Almoravid Banū Ghāniya.
600/1204	Capture of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade. Byzantine rule reduced to the region around Nicaea and the principality of Trebizond.
603/1207	Kaykhusraw I captures Antalya on the Mediterranean.
609/1212	The Almohad caliph al Nāṣir is defeated by the Christians at Las Navas de Tolosa (al 'Iqāb).
610/1213	Beginning of the rise of the Marīnids.
611/1214	Kaykā'ūs I captures Sinop on the Black Sea.
614 18/1217 21	Fifth Crusade.
616/1219	Crusaders' conquest of Damietta.
618/1221	The Crusaders leave Egypt.
621 44/1224 46	Deportation of the Muslims of the Val di Mazara to Lucera in Apulia.
625/1228	Ibn Hūd al Judhāmī rebels against the Almohads in al Andalus. The caliph al Ma'mūn crosses the Straits to depose Yahyā al Mu'taṣim in Marrakesh.
626/1228f.	Sixth Crusade. The Crusaders recapture Jerusalem. End of Ayyūbid rule and beginning of Rasūlid rule in Yemen.
627/1229	Beginning of the Ḥafṣid dynasty in Ifrīqiya.
627/1230	Kaykubād I defeats the Khwāraz Shāh at Yassi Chimen.
628/1231	Majorca conquered by the Aragonese.
633/1236	Christian conquest of Cordoba. The Mongols invade Georgia.
635/1238	Christian conquest of Valencia.
638/1240	Death of the Sufi Muḥyī 'l Dīn ibn al 'Arabī. Rebellion of Bābā Ishāq. The Ayyūbid ruler of Egypt al Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb takes actions against the <i>amīrs</i> of the Ashrafiyya and deprives them of their <i>iqṭā's</i> .
641/1243	The Mongol Ilkhans annihilate the Saljuq army at Köse Dağ east of Sivas.
642/1244	The Khwarizmians take back Jerusalem from the Franks.
643/1246	Treaty of Jaén: the Naṣrid sultan surrenders Granada to the king of Castile and León and agrees to become

- his vassal. Nomination of a Franciscan friar as bishop in Marrakesh to cater for the needs of the Christian mercenaries.
- 645/1248 The Almohad caliph al Sa'īd attempts to regain control of the Maghrib and Ifrīqiya, but is defeated by the 'Abd al Wādīd ruler of Tlemcen.
- 646/1248 Seventh Crusade. Conquest of Seville and Jaén by Fernando III of Castile.
- 647/1249 The Crusaders take Damietta.
- 648/1250 Mamlūks' victory over the Franks at al Maṣṣūra. End of Ayyūbid dynasty. First official celebration of the birthday of the Prophet (*mawlid al nabī*) in 'Azafid Ceuta.
- 648/1251 Beginning of the Turkish Mamlūk sultanate in Egypt.
- 650/1253 The Ḥafṣīd ruler proclaims himself *amīr al mu'minīn* with the caliphal title of al Mustanṣir.
- 654/1256 The Mongols invade Anatolia again.
- 656/1258 The Mongols under Hülegü sack Baghdad. Death of the Maghribi Sufi al Shādhilī.
- 657/1259 The Sharīfs of Mecca acknowledge the Ḥafṣīd caliphate.
- 658/1260 Mamlūk victory over the Mongols at the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt. The Ḥafṣīd al Mustanṣir orders the execution of his chancery chief, the Andalusi man of letters Ibn al Abbār.
- 659/1260 Alfonso X of Castile attacks the port of Salé.
- 659/1261 The Mamlūk ruler Baybars installs an 'Abbāsīd caliph in Cairo with the regnal title al Mustanṣir. The 'Abbāsīd caliph appoints Baybars as sultan. Celebration of *mawlid al nabī* in Egypt. Michael VIII Palaeologus (1259–82) recaptures Constantinople from the Latins.
- 660/1262 Marrakesh attacked by the Marīnids.
- 662/1263 Commercial agreement between Mamlūk Egypt and Aragón.
- 663/1264 Mudejar revolt in the Iberian Peninsula.
- 663/1264 Baybars receives a delegation from Charles of Anjou which signifies European recognition of the Mamlūk sultanate as a great power in the Middle East and

- signals the weakening of European support of the Crusaders.
- 663/1265 The Mamlūk ruler Baybars grants representation to the four Sunnī schools of law.
- 668/1269 Marīnid conquest of Marrakesh. End of the Almohad caliphate.
- 670/1271 Lord Edward, son of King Henry III of England, leads a Crusader force to Acre and gains limited cooperation with the Ilkhanid Mongols. Extirpation of the Assassins in their fortresses in northern Syria. Baybars conquers Antioch from Bohemond VI.
- 672/1273 Death of the Sufi Jalāl al Dīn al Rūmī.
- 673/1274 Marīnid conquest of Sijilmāsa. Firearms used for the first time in the Maghrib.
- 674/1275 Marīnid foundation of Fās al Jadīd (New Fez). Massacre of Jews. The Almohad shaykhs who resist in Tinmal are decapitated.
- 675/1276 First Marīnid *madrassa*. Death of the Ḥafṣid caliph al Mustanṣir and beginning of a lengthy period (675 718/1277 1318) of upheaval in Ifrīqiya.
- 675/1277 Baybars invades eastern Anatolia and defeats an Ilkhanid army near Elbistan.
- 680/1281 The Ilkhanid army is routed by the Mamlūks near Ḥimṣ.
- 681/1282 Death of Ibn Khallikān, author of a biographical dictionary of persons who for some reason or other had gained fame.
- 684/1285 Qalāwūn's truce with Leon II guarantees an annual tribute and secures the safe passage of slave imports from the Golden Horde to Egypt through Armenian land.
- 688/1289 Mamlūk conquest of Tripoli from the Crusaders.
- 689/1290 Mamlūk capture of Acre that brings the Crusader presence in the Levant to an end.
- 691/1292 Marīnid institutionalisation of the *mawlid al nabī* as an official festival.
- 700/1301 Unprecedented discriminatory policy against the Copts.
- 704/1304 First Marīnid organised pilgrimage to Mecca.

709/1309	Death of the Sufi Ibn 'Atā' Allāh, author of a breviary which acquired enormous popularity.
715/1315	Egypt's land survey.
721/1321	Anti Christian riots in Egypt.
723/1323	Peace treaty between the Mamlūks and the Mongol Ilkhans.
c. 724/1324	Death of 'Othmān (Osman), the eponym of the Ottomans.
725/1325	Failure of the Mamlūk attempt to expand sphere of influence to Yemen.
726/1326	The Ottomans take Brusa.
728/1328	Death of the jurist and theologian Ibn Taymiyya.
731/1331	The <i>beglik</i> of Menteshe concludes a treaty with Venice. Fall of İznik (Nicaea) into Ottoman hands.
741/1340	Marīnid defeat at Río Salado (Iberian Peninsula) by Christian troops.
748 50/1348 50	Black Death. Cairo loses approximately 40 per cent of its population. Marīnid occupation of Ḥafṣid Tunis. The Ottomans plunder the plains near Thessaloniki.
753/1352	The traveller and scholar Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visits Mali.
755/1354	Attacks against the Copts in Egypt leading to conversions to Islam. A great earthquake destroys the walls of Gallipoli and other towns in the area which are swiftly occupied by the Ottomans. The Genoese Filippo Doria takes possession of Tripoli and sells it to Aḥmad Makkī, who recognises the sovereignty of the Marīnid sultans until 766/1364f.
758/1357	Ḥafṣid Tunis occupied by the Marīnids (second time).
770/1368	Death of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa.
773/1369	The Ottoman sultan Murād I takes Edirne (Adrianople).
777/1375	The <i>beglik</i> of Germiyān passes to the Ottomans. Cilician Armenia becomes a vassalage of the Mamlūk sultanate.
784/1382	Restoration of the non dynastic Mamlūk sultanate, with a move from a Turkish to a Circassian sultanate.
788/1386 7	The Ottoman sultan Murād I defeats Qaramān near Konya. The Ottomans take Thessaloniki.
789/1387	Trade treaty between the Genoese and the Ottomans.

791/1389	Battle of Kosovo. The Ottoman sultan Murād and the Serbian leader Lazar lose their lives.
795/1392	King Martino of Sicily (Aragonese) takes possession of Djerba (until 801/1398).
796/1394	The Ottomans lay siege to the Byzantine capital Constantinople.
798/1396	Battle of Nikopolis, defeat of King Sigismund of Hungary at the hands of the Ottomans.
799/1397	Bāyezīd I attacks Qaramān.
803/1400	Timur Leng invades Syria. Aleppo and Damascus are sacked.
804/1402	Timur Leng defeats the Ottoman sultan Bāyezīd I in Ankara.
807/1405	Death of Timur Leng.
808/1406	Death of Ibn Khaldūn.
811/1408	The Mamlūks appoint the ruler of Mecca vice sultan of the Ḥijāz.
818/1415	Ceuta is conquered by the Portuguese. Grain riots in the Mamlūk sultanate.
819/1416	Revolt of Börklüje Muṣṭafā near Izmir.
820/1417	Ottoman forces invade Albania and gain access to the Adriatic Sea.
821/1418	Death of al Qalqashandī, author of a famous secretarial manual and encyclopaedia.
823/1420	Meḥmed I takes the Genoese colony of Samsun.
824/1421	Grain riots in the Mamlūk sultanate. Death of the Ottoman sultan Meḥmed I.
833 4/1430	Thessaloniki and Ioannina fall under direct Ottoman rule.
840/1437	‘Discovery’ of the grave of Idrīs II in Fez that supported Sharīfism.
842 3/1438 9	Direct Ottoman rule over northern Serbia.
845/1442	Death of the Egyptian historian al Maqrīzī.
848/1444	Treaty of Edirne concluded between the Ottomans and Vladislav, Branković and Hunyadi. Battle of Varna between the Ottomans and Hungary with Ottoman victory.
857/1453	Ottoman conquest of Constantinople.

858/1454	End of the Rasūlids and rise of the Ṭāhirids in Yemen.
868/1464	Meḥmed the Conqueror resumes Ottoman expansion in Anatolia.
869/1465	Revolution in Fez and execution of the last Marīnid sultan by the <i>sharīfs</i> of Fez. The Portuguese take al Qaṣr al Ṣaghīr.
872/1468f.	Timbuktu taken by the Songhay king Sunni ‘Alī Beri.
874/1470	Qaramān is formally annexed by the Ottomans.
875/1471	The Portuguese take Tangier.
894/1489	Ottomans defeated by the Mamlūks at the battle of Agha Çayiri.
896/1491	Peace treaty between Ottomans and Mamlūks.
897/1492	Christian conquest of Granada. Forced conversion of the Jews of Spain. ‘Discovery’ of America.
898/1493	Askīyā Muḥammad’s coup d’état against Sunni ‘Alī in Songhay.
903/1497	Spanish conquest of Melilla. The Portuguese irrupt into the Indian Ocean world.
906 7/1501	Ismā‘īl Shāh, the Safavid ruler, makes Twelver Shī‘ism the state religion. Muslim ships are sunk off Calicut in Kerala.
909/1503	A Portuguese squadron cruises at the entrance to the Red Sea.
910/1504	The Barbarossa brothers (Oruj and Khayreddīn) make La Goulette a base port for their activities.
911/1505	Death of the religious scholar and polygraph al Suyūṭī.
911 17/1505 II	Spain occupies the major points on the Mediterranean coast in Ifrīqiya.
914/1508	The Mamlūk sultan al Ghawrī begins establishing an artillery corps to face European (Portuguese) expansion. Oran is taken by Spain.
915/1510	The Moroccan <i>sharīf</i> Muḥammad al Qā’im emerges as the <i>mahdī</i> destined to revive the fortunes of Islam. Spain takes Tripoli.
916/1510	The Ḥafṣid sultan gives the Barbarossa brothers permission to establish a secondary base in Djerba. Tripoli and Bougie are occupied by the Spaniards. Algiers agrees to pay tribute to Spain.

917/1511	The Ottoman prince Qorqud faces a rebellion in south western Anatolia led by Shāh Qulu ('Slave of the Shāh'). A corps of harquebusiers is recruited from outside the <i>mamlūks</i> ' cadres. The king of Tlemcen accepts Spanish sovereignty.
920/1514	The Ottoman sultan Selīm I routs the Safavid Shāh Ismā'īl at Chaldiran. Oruj Barbarossa attempts to retake Bougie from the Spaniards.
921/1515	Before this year Leo Africanus visited Timbuktu.
922/1516	Selīm I defeats the Mamlūk sultan at Marj Dābiq. Ottoman conquest of Aleppo and Damascus. The Barbarossa brothers occupy Algiers.
923/1517	Ottoman conquest of Cairo and end of Mamlūk sultanate. End of the Tāhirid sultanate in Yemen.
924/1518	Oruj Barbarossa is killed.
925/1519	Charles V is elected Holy Roman Emperor.
926/1519	Khayreddīn Barbarossa presents the Ottoman sultan Selīm I with the newly acquired territories in North Africa.
926/1520	Süleymān I the Magnificent becomes the Ottoman sultan. He would later claim the title of caliph. Mamlūk revolt in Syria against the Ottomans.
929/1522	Khayreddīn Barbarossa takes Bone and Constantine. Conquest of Kazan by Ivan the Terrible.
932/1525 6	Ottoman invasion of Hungary: Süleymān defeats and kills King Lajos at the battle of Mohács. Khayreddīn Barbarossa takes Algiers.
935/1529	First siege of Vienna.
939/1532	Khayreddīn Barbarossa forces the king of Tlemcen to pay tribute.
940/1533	Süleymān appoints Khayreddīn Barbarossa commander in chief of the Ottoman fleet.
941/1534	Ottoman conquest of Baghdad. Khayreddīn Barbarossa seizes Tunis and expels the Ḥafṣid sultan.
941/1535	Charles V leads an expedition against Tunis and restores the Ḥafṣid sultan. The corsairs call in Ottoman help.

- 942 3/1536 Süleymân and the king of France Francis I form an alliance.
- 945/1538 Ottoman invasion of Yemen. The Ottoman fleet besieges unsuccessfully the Portuguese fort of Diu in Gujarat.
- 948/1541 Ottoman conquests in Hungary. Charles V leads an unsuccessful naval expedition against Algiers.
- 949/1542 Ferdinand besieges Buda unsuccessfully.
- 951/1544 The corsair ʿTurghûd briefly occupies al Mahdiyya, being dislodged by the Spaniards.
- 954/1547 Truce between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans. The Zayyânîd king of Tlemcen asks for the protection of Spain, but it is eventually incorporated into the Ottoman 'regency of Algiers'.
- 955/1548 Ottoman campaign against the Safavids.
- 957/1550 The Sa'dî Muḥammad al Mahdî takes Fez.
- 958/1551 Tripoli and Tlemcen fall to the Ottomans.
- 959/1552 Failed Ottoman attempt to conquer Hormuz.
- 961/1554 Muḥammad al Shaykh al Sa'dî conquers Fez a second time and eliminates the Waṭṭâsîd dynasty.
- 962/1555 Treaty establishing the borders between the Safavid and Ottoman empires. The Ottomans establish the province of Ethiopia, on the African Red Sea littoral (capital, Massawa).
- 963/1555 Bougie is taken from Spain. ʿTurghûd obtains the governorship of Tripolitania.
- 965/1558 Qayrawân submits to ʿTurghûd.
- 972f./1565 Failure of Ottoman siege of Malta.
- 974/1566 Death of Süleymân the Magnificent.
- 974/1567 Spanish attempt to conquer Algiers. The Ottomans lose Yemen.
- 976/1568 Ottoman failed plan for the construction of a canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.
- 976 8/1568 70 Great Morisco rebellion in Granada. Ottoman reconquest of Yemen.
- 977/1569 The kingdom of Tunis incorporated into the Ottoman empire. Failed Ottoman attack against Astrakhan.
- 979/1571 The allied fleet of Venice, Spain, the Knights of St John and the Pope destroy much of the Ottoman fleet off Naupaktos (Lepanto) in the Gulf of Corinth.

980 2/1572 4	Great epidemic at Algiers.
981/1573	Tunis is retaken by the Spaniards.
982/1574	The Ottomans take definitive control of Tunis.
986/1578	Defeat of the Portuguese at Wādī al Makhāzin and death of Don Sebastian.
986/1578	Ottoman Safavid war.
989/1581	The British Levant Company is granted the monopoly to trade in the Ottoman empire.
993/1585	The corsair Murād Ra'īs ventures into the Atlantic and plunders the Canary Islands.
996/1587	The <i>beglerbegis</i> of Algiers are replaced by pashas appointed for a term of three years. This system lasts until 1070/1659.
996/1588	Death of the Ottoman architect Sinān. Defeat of the Spanish Armada by Elizabethan England.
999/1591	Moroccan conquest of Timbuktu.
1001 15/1593 1606	Ottoman 'Long War' with the Habsburgs.
1002/1593	The scholar Aḥmad Bābā al Tinbuktī, who resisted the Sa'dī conquest of his land, is arrested by the Moroccans.
1004 7/1595 8	One of the deys (Ottoman officers), 'Othmān, sets up a kind of principality in Tunisia.
1005/1596	Rebellion of Qara Yaziji in Anatolia. Ottoman victory of Mezökeretes/Haçova against the Habsburgs.
1017 23/1609 14	Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain.
1018/1610	Larache passes to Christian hands. The French destroy the major part of the Tunisian fleet in La Goulette.
1032/1622	Treaty between England and Algiers.
1034/1624	The Dutch threaten Algiers.
1035/1626	Treaty between the Dutch and Algiers.
1036/1627	Death of Aḥmad Bābā al Timbuktī.
1037/1627	Pirates from Algiers sack the coast of Iceland.
1038/1628	Treaty between France and Algiers.
1041/1631	Corsairs from Algiers reach England.
1049/1639	Treaty of Qaş ı Şırīn.
1055 80/1645 9	Ottoman conquest of Crete.
1076/1665	Siege of Malta from Tripoli.
1666 CE	Messianic movement of Sabbatai Zevi.
1084/1673	Murād II establishes a hereditary monarchy in Tunisia.

Chronology

1094/1683	Second siege of Vienna.
1110/1699	Peace treaty of Karlowitz.
1118/1706	Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī establishes himself as the monarch in Tunis.
1120/1708	The Spaniards are dislodged from Oran.
1123/1711	Ḥamīd Qaramanlī takes power in Tripoli.
1126 31/1714 18	Ottoman Habsburg Venetian war.
1130/1718	Peace treaty of Passarowitz.
1132 4/1720 1	Embassy of Yirmisekiz Meḥmed Chelebi to France.
1182/1768	Ottoman declaration of war against Russia after Poland’s partition.
1182/1769	The ‘Alawī sultan Sīdī Muḥammad takes Mazagan (al Jadīda), ending more than 250 years of Portuguese control.
1183/1770	A Russian naval detachment lands in Mora and destroys the Ottoman fleet before the Anatolian port of Cheshme.
1188/1774	Peace of Küchük Kaynarja between Ottomans and Russians.
1197/1783	Annexation of Crimea by Russia.
1203/1789	Selīm III becomes the Ottoman sultan and begins period of reforms.
1204/1789	The Ottoman government pressures the saint Sīdī Aḥmad al Tijānī to leave his <i>zāwiya</i> in ‘Ayn Mādī to go and live in Fez.
1205/1790	Algiers can only arm four ships. Decline of piracy in the Mediterranean.
1218/1804	‘Uthmān dan Fodio’s <i>hijra</i> from Degel to Gudu.
1222/1807	Overthrow of Selīm III by janissary revolt.

Abbreviations

AA	<i>Al Andalus</i>
AI	<i>Annales Islamologiques</i>
<i>Annales ESC</i>	<i>Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations</i>
AQ	<i>Al Qanṭara</i>
BEO	<i>Bulletin d'Études Orientales</i>
BRIJMES	<i>British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
CSHB	<i>Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae</i>
EI ²	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i>
IC	<i>Islamic Culture</i>
IJAHS	<i>International Journal of African Historical Studies</i>
IJMES	<i>International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies</i>
IJTS	<i>International Journal of Turkish Studies</i>
ILS	<i>Islamic Law and Society</i>
IOS	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i>
JAH	<i>Journal of African History</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSAI	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Turkish Studies</i>
MEAH	<i>Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos</i>
MSR	<i>Mamluk Studies Review</i>
MUSJ	<i>Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph</i>
MW	<i>Muslim World</i>
RA	<i>Revue Africaine</i>

List of abbreviations

<i>REI</i>	<i>Revue des Études Islamiques</i>
<i>REMMM</i>	<i>Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée</i>
<i>ROMM</i>	<i>Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée</i>
<i>SI</i>	<i>Studia Islamica</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

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Chapter 8: The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria: the Turkish Mamlūk sultanate (648–784/1250–1382) and the Circassian Mamlūk sultanate (784–923/1382–1517)

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Chapter 9: Western Arabia and Yemen (fifth/ eleventh century to the Ottoman conquest)

1. Western Arabia

Practical suggestions for further reading

Despite the region's importance, there is no comprehensive study on the history of the Ḥijāz for the period treated. Also, there are no recent studies on the history of the Ḥaramayn during that time in Western languages.

Basically, 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ Badr, *Al-Ta'rīkh al-shāmil li'l-Madīna al-munawwara*, 3 vols., Medina, 1414/1993, and Aḥmad al-Sibā'ī, *Ta'rīkh Makka: Dirāsāt fi'l-siyāsa wa'l-'ilm wa'l-ijtimā' wa'l-'umrān*, 2 vols. in 1, 4th edn, Mecca, 1979, are useful for the general outlines of the history of the Ḥaramayn.

Focusing on Mecca and valuable for at least an overview on its political history and wider influence in the Ḥijāz are, though dated, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka*, vol. I: *Die Stadt und ihre Herren*, The Hague, 1888, and Gerald de Gaury, *Rulers of Mecca*, London, 1951.

For religio-cultural aspects of Mecca's development see Hassan Mohammed El-Hawary and Gaston Wiet, *Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum arabicarum*, part 4: *Arabie, inscriptions et monuments de la Mecque: Ḥaram et Ka'ba*, Cairo, 1985, and Richard T. Mortel, 'Madrasas in Mecca during the medieval period: A descriptive study based on literary sources', *BSOAS*, 60 (1997), 236–52.

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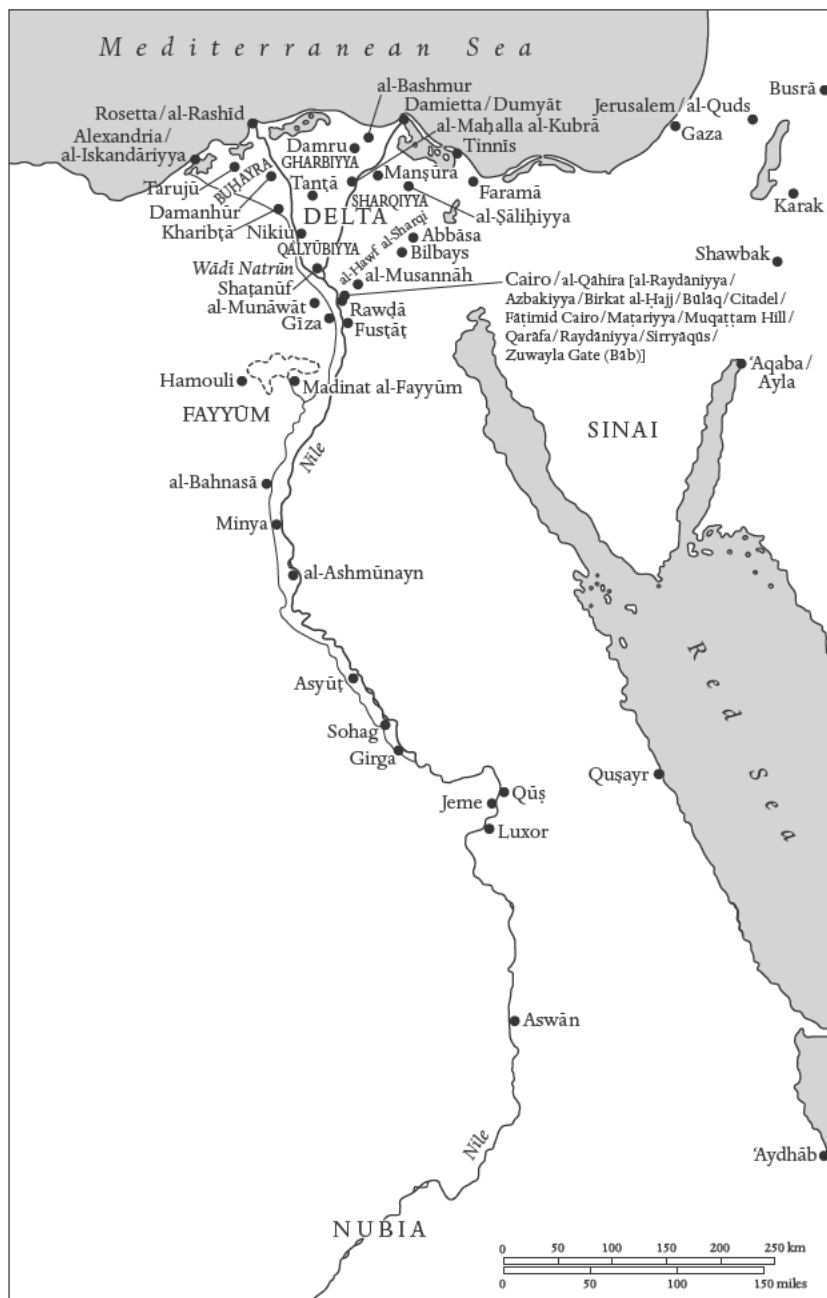
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Map 5 The Ayyubid territories in 615/1218



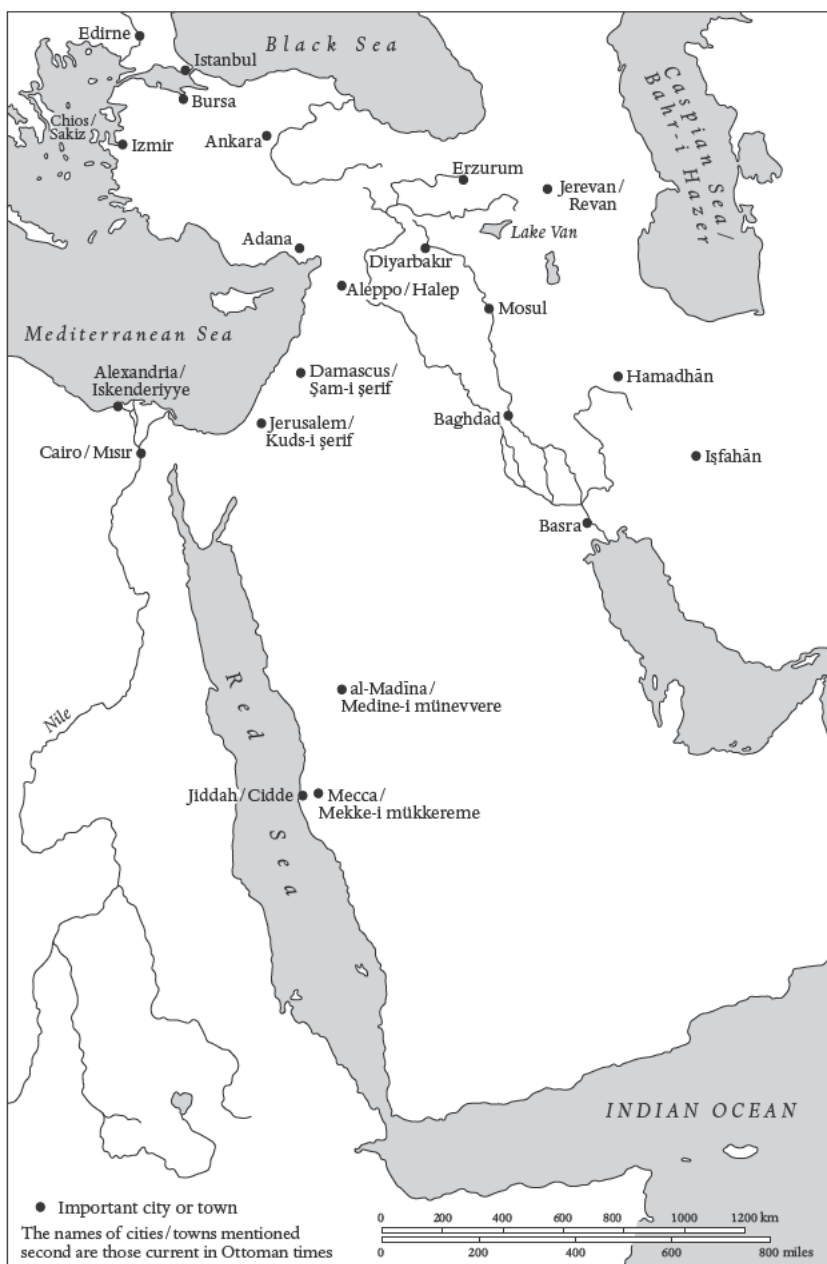
Map 6 Islamic (post conquest) Egypt



Map 7 The Turks in Anatolia before the Ottomans



Map 8 The Ottoman empire in 1566



Map 9 The Ottoman empire in Asia and Africa



Map 10 The Red Sea region